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Alfred Zantzinger Reed
Philadelphia 2 June. 1899

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POEMS

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1st. THE ART *of* PRESERVING HEALTH,
by J. Armstrong, M. D.

2d. THE MINSTREL, *or* PROGRESS *of* GENIUS,
by James Beattie, LL. D.

3d. THE PLEASURES *of* IMAGINATION,
by Dr. Akenside.

4th. THE TASK, *by Wm. Cowper,* Esq.

Baltimore:
Printed and Sold by
WARNER & HANNA.

1802.

THE

ART

OF PRESERVING

HEALTH.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG, M. D.

"*Armstrong's Art of preserving health is a Poem which can never be sufficiently praised, read and recommended.*"

Pursuits of Literature, note on line 100, Dial. third.

ARGOSY 12 July 1957

THE

Art of preserving Health.

BOOK I.

A I R.

DAUGHTER of Pæan, queen of every joy,
HYGEIA*; whose indulgent smile sustains
The various race luxuriant nature pours,
And on th' immortal essences bestows
Immortal youth; auspicious, O descend!
Thou cheerful guardian of the rolling year,
Whether thou wanton'st on the western gale,
Or shak'st the rigid pinions of the north,
Diffusest life and vigour through the tracts
Of air, thro' earth, and ocean's deep domain.

* Hygeia, the goddess of health, was, according to the genealogy of the heathen deities, the daughter of Æsculapius: who, as well as Apollo, was distinguished by the name of Pæan.

When through the blue serenity of heaven
Thy power approaches, all the wasteful host
Of pain and sickness, squalid and deform'd,
Confounded sink into the loathsome gloom,
Where in deep Erebus involv'd the fiends
Grow more profane. Whatever shapes of death,
Shook from the hedious chambers of the globe,
Swarm thro' the shudd'ring air: whatever plagues
Or meagre famine breeds, or with slow wings
Rise from the putrid watery element,
The damp waste forest, motionless and rank,
That smothers earth and all the breathless winds,
Or the vile carnage of the inhuman field;
Whatever baneful breaths the rotten South;
Whatever ills th' the extremes or sudden change
Of cold and hot, or moist and dry produce;
They fly thy pure effulgence: they, and all
The secret poisons of avenging heaven,
And all the pale tribes halting in the train
Of Vice and headless Pleasure: or if aught
The comet's glare amid the burning sky,
Mournful eclipse, or planets ill combin'd,
Portend disasterous to the vital world;
Thy salutary power averts their rage,
Averts the general bane: and but for thee
Nature would sicken, nature soon would die.

Without thy cheerful active energy
No rapture swells the breast, no poet sings,
No more the maids of Helicon delight.
Come then with me, O Goddess heavenly gay!
Begin the song; and let it sweetly flow,
And let it sweetly teach thy wholesome laws:
" How best the fickle fabric to support
" Of mortal man; in healthful body how
" A healthful mind the longest to maintain."
'Tis hard, in such a strife of rules, to chuse
The best, and those of most extensive use;
Harder in clear and animated song
Dry philosophic precepts to convey.
Yet with thy aid the secrets wilds I trace
Of nature, and with daring steps proceed
Through paths the muses never trod before.

Nor shall I wander doubtful of my way,
Had I the lights of that sagacious mind

Which taught to check the pestilential fire,
And quell the deadly Python of the Nile.
O thou belov'd by all the graceful arts,
Thou long the fav'rite of the healing powers,
Indulge, O MEAD! a well-design'd essay,
Howe'er imperfect: and permit that I
My little knowledge with my country share.
Till you the rich Asclepian stores unlock,
And with new graces dignify the theme.

YE who amid the feverish world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares a mind;
Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air;
Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
And volatile corruption, from the dead,
The dying, sick'ning, and the living world
Exhal'd, to sully heaven's transparent dome
With dim mortality. It is not air
That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations rank and fell,
The spoils of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
Of nature, when from shape and texture she
Relapses into fighting elements;
It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things.
Much moisture hurts: but here a sordid bath,
With oily rancour fraught, relaxes more,
The solid frame than simple moisture can.
Besides, immur'd in many a sullen bay
That never felt the freshness of the breeze,
This slumbering Deep remains, and ranker grows
With sickly rest: and (tho' the lungs abhor
To drink the dun fuliginous abyss)
Did not the acid vigour of the mine,
Roll'd from so many thund'ring chimneys, tame
The putrid streams that overswarm the sky;
This caustic venom would perhaps corrode
Those tender cells that draw the vital air,
In vain with all their unctuous rills bedewed;
Or by the drunken venous tubes, that yawn
In countless pores o'er all the previous skin,
Imbib'd would poison the Balsamic blood,
And rouse the heart to every fever's rage
While yet you breathe, away; the rural wilds
Invite; the mountains call you, and the vales;
The woods the streams, and each ambrosial breeze

That fans the ever undulating sky;
A kindly sky! whose fost'ring pow'r regales
Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign.
Find then some woodland scene where nature smiles
Benign, where all her honest children thrive.
To us their wants not many a happy seat;
Look round the smiling land, such numbers rise
We hardly fix, bewildered in our choice.
See where enthron'd in adamantine state,
Proud of her bards, imperial Windsor sits;
There chuse thy seat in some aspiring grove
Fast by the slowly-winding Thames; or where
Broader she leaves fair Richmond's green retreats,
(Richmond that sees and hundred villa's rise
Rural or gay.) O! from the summer's rage
O! wrap me in the friendly gloom that hides
Umbrageous Ham! But if the busy town
Attract thee still to toil for power or gold,
Sweetly thou mayest thy vacant hours possess
In Hamstead, courted by the western wind;
Or Greenwich, waving o'er the winding flood;
Or loose the world among the sylvan wilds
Of Dulwich, yet by barbarous arts unspoil'd.
Green rise the Kentish hills in cheerful air;
But on the marshy plains that Essex spreads
Build not, nor rest too long thy wandering feet.
For on a rustic throne of dewy turf,
With baneful fogs her aching temples bound,
Quartana there presides: a meagre fiend
Begot by Eurus, when his brutal force
Compress'd the slothful Naiad of the Fens.
From such a mixture, sprung this fitful pest
With fev'rish blasts subdues the sick'ning land:
Cold tremours come, with mighty love of rest,
Convulsive yawnings, lassitude and pains
That sting the burden'd brows, fatigue the loins,
And rack the joints and every torpid limb;
Then parching heat succeeds, till copious sweats
O'erflow: a short relief from former ills.
Beneath repeated shocks the wretches pine;
The vigour sinks, the habit melts away;
The cheerful pure and animated bloom
Dies from the face, with squalid atrophy
Devour'd, in sallow melancholy clad.
And oft the Sorceress, in her sated wrath,
Resigns them to the furies of her train;

The blotted Hydrops, and the yellow fiend
Ting'd with her own accumulated gall.

In quest of sites, avoid the mournful plain
Where osiers thirve, and trees that love the lake ;
Where many lazy muddy rivers flow :
Nor for the wealth that all the Indies roll
Fix near the marshy margin of the main.
For from the humid soil and watry reign
Eternal vapours rise ; the spungy air
Forever weeps ; or turgid with the weight
Of waters, pours a sounding deluge down.
Skies such as these let ev'ry mortal shun
Who dreads the dropsy, palsy, or the gout,
Tertian, corrosive scurvy, or the moist catarrh ;
Or any other injury that grows
From raw-spun fibres idle and unstrung,
Skin ill perspiring, and the purple flood
In languid eddies loitering into phlegm.

Yet not alone from humid skies we pine ;
For air may be too dry. The subtle heaven,
That winnows into dust the blasted downs,
Bare and extended wide without a stream,
Too fast imbibes th' attenuated lymph
Which, by the surface, from the blood exhales.
The lungs grow rigid, and with toil essay
Their flexible vibrations ; or inflam'd,
Their tender ever-moving structure thaws.
Spoil'd of its limpid vehicle, the blood
A mass of lees remains, a drossy tide
That slow as Lethe wanders thro' the veins ;
Unactive in the services of life,
Unfit to lead its pitchy current through
The secret mazy channels of the brain.
The melancolic Fiend (That worst despair
Of physic,) hence the rust complexion'd man
Pursues, whose blood is dry, whose fibres gain
Too stretch a tone : and hence in climes adust
So sudden tumults seize the trembling nerves,
And burning fevers glow with double rage.

Fly, if you can, these violent extremes
Of Air ; the wholesome is nor moist nor dry.
But as the power of chusing is deny'd
To half mankind, a farther task ensues ;

How best to mitigate these fell extremes,
How breath unhurt, the withering element,
Or hazy atmosphere: though Custom moulds
To ev'ry clime the soft Promothean clay;
And he who first the fogs of Essex breath'd
(So kind is native air) may in the fens
Of Essex from the inveterate ills revive
At pure Montpelier or Bermuda caught.
But if the raw and oozy heaven offend;
Correct the soil, and dry the sources up
Of watery exhalations; wide and deep
Conduct your trenches through the quaking bog;
Solicitous, with all your winding arts.
Betray th' unwilling lake into the stream;
And weed the forest, and invoke the winds
To break the toils where strangled vapours lie;
Or through the thickets send the crackling flames.
Mean time at home with cheerful fire dispel
The humid air: and let your table smoke
With solid roast or bak'd; or what the herds
Of tamer breed supply; or what the wilds
Yield to the toilsome pleasures of the chace.
Generous your wine, the boast of ripening years,
But frugal be your cups; the languid frame,
Vapid and sunk from yesterday's debauch,
Shrinks from the cold embrace of watery heaven.
But neither these nor all Apollo's arts,
Disarm the dangers of the dropping sky,
Unless with exercise and manly toil
You brace your nerves, and spur the lagging blood.
The fat'ning clime let all the sons of ease
Avoid; if indolence would wish to live.
Go, yawn and loiter out the long slow year
In fairer skies. If droughty regions parch
The skin and lungs, and break the thickening blood;
Deep in the waving forests chuse your seat
Where fuming trees refresh the thirsty air;
And wake the fountains from their secret beds,
And into lakes dilate the rapid stream
Here spread your gardens wide; and let the cool,
The moist relaxing vegetable store,
Prevail in each repast: Your food supplied
By bleeding life, be gently wasted down,
By soft decoction and a mellowing heat,
To liquid balm; or, if the solid mass
You chuse, tormented in the boiling wave;

That thro' the thirsty channels of the blood
A smooth dilured chyle may flow,
The fragrant dairy from its cool recess
Its nectar acid or benign will pour
To drown your thirst ; or let the mantling bowl
Of keen Sherbert the fickle taste relieve.
For with the viscous blood the simple stream
Will hardly mingle ; and fermented cups
Oft dissipate more moisture than they give.
Yet when pale seasons rise, or winter rolls
His horrors o'er the world, thou may'st indulge
In feasts more genial, bud impatient broach
The mellow cask. Then too the scourging air
Provokes to keener toils than sultry droughts
Allow. But rarely we such skies blaspheme.
Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs
Bedew'd, our seasons droop : incumbent still
A ponderous heaven o'erwhelms the sinking soul.
Lab'ring with storms in heapy mountains rise
Th' imbattled clouds, as if the Stygian shades
Had left the dungeon of eternal night,
Till black with thunder all the south descends.
Scarce is a showerless day the heavens indulge
Our melting clime ; except the baleful East
Withers the tender spring, and sourly checks
The fancy of the year. Our fathers talk
Of summers, balmy airs, and skies serene.
Good heaven! for what unexpiated crimes
This dismal change ! The brooding elements
Do they, your powerful ministers of wrath,
Prepare some fierce exterminating plague ?
Or is it fix'd in the Decrees above
That lofty Albion melt into the main ?
Indulgent nature ! O dissolve this gloom ?
Bind in eternal adamant the winds
That drown or wither : Give the genial West
To breathe, and in its turn the sprightly North :
And may once more the circling seasons rule
The year ; not mix in every monstrous day.

Meantime the moist malignity to shun
Of burthen'd skies ; mark where the dry champain
Swells into cheerful hills ; where Marjoram
And Thyme, the love of bees prefume the air ;
And where the * Cynorrhodon with the rose

* The wild rose, or that which grows on the common briar.

For fragrance vies; for in the thirsty soil
Most fragrant breathe the aromatic tribes.
There bid thy roofs high on the basking steep
Ascend, there light thy hospitable fires.
And let them see the winter morn arise,
The summer evening blushing in the west;
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind
O'erhung, defends you from the blust'ring north,
And bleak affliction of the peevish east.
O! when the growling winds contend, and all
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm;
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din
Howl o'er the steady battlements, delights
Above the luxury of common sleep.
The murmuring rivulet, and the hoarser strain
Of waters rushing o'er the slippery rocks,
Will nightly lull you to ambrosial rest.
To please the fancy is no trifling good,
Where health is studied; for whatever moves
The mind with calm delight, promotes the just
And natural movements of the harmonious frame.
Besides, the sportive brook forever shakes
The trembling air; that floats from hill to hill,
From vale to mountain, with incessant change
Of purest element, refreshing still
Your airy seat, and uninfected Gods.
Chiefly for this I praise the man who builds
High on the breezy ridge, whose lofty sides
Th' etherial deep with endless billows chafes.
His purer mansion nor contagious years
Shall reach, nor deadly putrid airs annoy.

But may no fogs, from lake or fenny plain,
Involve my hill! And wheresoe'er you build;
Whether on sun-burnt Epsom, or the plains
Wash'd by the silent Lee; in Chelsea low,
Or high blackheath with wintry winds assail'd;
Dry be your house: but airy more than warm.
Else every breath of ruder wind will strike
Your tender body thro' with rapid pains;
Fierce coughs will teize you, hoarsness bind your voice,
Or moist Gravado load your aching brows.
These to defy, and all the fates that dwell
In cloister'd air, tainted with streaming life,
Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms;
And still at azure noontide may you dome
At every window drink the liquid sky.

Need we the sunny situation here,
And theatres open to the south, commend?
Here, where the morning's misty breath infests
More than the torrid noon? How sickly grow,
How pale, the plants in those ill-fated vales,
That, circled round with the gigantic heap
Of mountains, never felt, nor ever hope
To feel, the genial vigor of the sun!
While on the neighbouring hill the rose inflames
The verdant spring; in virgin beauty blows
The tender lily, languishingly sweet;
O'er every hedge the wanton woodbine roves,
And autumn ripens in the summer's ray.
Nor less the warmer living tribes demand
The fost'ring sun: whose energy divine
Dwells not in mortal fire; whose gen'rous heat
Glows thro'the mass of grosser elements,
And kindles into life the ponderous spheres.
Cheer'd by thy kind, invigorating warmth,
We court thy beams, great majesty of day!
If not the soul, the regent of this world,
First-born of heaven, and only less than God!

BOOK II.

DIET.

ENOUGH of Air. A desart subject now,
Rougher and wilder, rises to my sight;
A barren waste, where not a garland grows
To bind the Muse's brow; not ev'n a proud,
Stupendous solicitude frowns o'er the heath,
To rouse a noble horror in the soul:
But rugged paths fatigue, and error leads
Through endless labyrinths the devious feet.
Farewell, ethereal fields! the humbler arts
Of life; the table of the homely Gods
Demand my song. Elysian gales adieu!

The blood, the fountain whence the spirits flow,
The generous stream that waters every part,
And motion, vigour, and warm life conveys
To every particle that moves or lives,
This vital fluid, through unnumber'd tubes
Pow'd by the heart, and to the heart again
Refunded; scourg'd for ever round and round;
Enrag'd with heat and toil, at last forgets
Its balmy nature; virulent and thin
It grows; and now, but that a thousand gates
Are open to its flight, it would destroy
The parts it cherish'd and repair'd before.
Besides, the flexible and tender tubes
Melt in the mildest, most nectareous tide
That ripening nature rolls; as in the stream
Its crumbling banks; but what the vital force
Of plastic fluids hourly batters down,

That very force, those plastic particles
Rebuild: so mutable the state of man.
For this the watchful appetite was giv'n,
Daily, with fresh materials, to repair
This unavoidable expence of life,
This necessary waste of flesh and blood.
Hence the concoctive powers, with various art,
Subdue the cruder aliments to chyle;
The chyle to blood; the foamy purple tide
To liquors, which, through finer arteries,
To different parts their winding course pursue;
To try new changes, and new forms put on,
Or for the public, or some private use.

Nothing so foreign but the athletic hind
Can labour into blood. The hungry meal
Alone he fears, or aliments too thin;
By violent powers too easily subdu'd,
Too soon expell'd. His daily labour thaws,
To friendly chyle, the most rebellious mass
That salt can harden, or the smoke of years;
Nor does his gorge the rancid bacon rue,
Nor that which Cestria sends, tenacious paste
Of solid milk. But ye of softer clay,
Infirm and delicate! and ye who waste,
With pale and bloated sloth, the tedious day!
Avoid the stubborn aliment, avoid
The full repast; and let sagacious age
Grow wiser, lesson'd by the dropping teeth.

Half subtiliz'd to chyle, the liquid food
Readiest obeys th' assimilating powers;
And soon the tender vegetable mass
Relents; and soon the young of those that tread
The steadfast earth, or cleave the green abyss,
Or pathless sky. And if the steer must fall,
In youth and sanguine vigour let him die;
Nor stay till rigid age, or heavy ails,
Absolve him, ill requited, from the yoke.
Some with high forage, and luxurient ease,
Indulge the veteran ox; but wiser thou,
From the bald mountain or the barren downs,
Expect the flocks by frugal nature fed;
A race of purer blood, with exercise
Refin'd and scanty fare; For, old or young,
The stall'd are never healthy; nor the crammed,

Not all the culinary arts can tame,
To wholesome food, the abominable growth
Of rest and gluttony; the prudent taste
Rejects, like bane, such loathsome lusciousness.
The languid stomach curses even the pure
Delicious fat, and all the race of oil:
For more the oily aliments relax
Its feeble tone; and with the eager lymph
(Fond to incorporate with all it meets)
Coily they mix, and shun with slippery wiles
The woo'd embrace. Th' irresoluble oil,
So gentle late, and blandishing, in floods
Of rancid bile o'erflows: what tumults hence,
What horrors rise, were nauseous to relate.
Choose leaner viands, ye whose jovial make
Too fast the gummy nutriment imbibes:
Choose sober meals: and rouse to active life
Your cumbrous clay; nor on th' infeebling down,
Irresolute, protract the morning hours.
But let the man whose bones are thinly clad,
With cheerful ease and succulent repast
Improve his slender habit. Each extreme
From the blest mean of sanity departs.

I could relate what table this demands,
Or that complexion; what the various powers
Of various foods: but fifty years would roll,
And fifty more, before the tale were done.
Besides, there often lurks some nameless, strange,
Peculiar thing; nor on the skin display'd,
Felt in the pulse, nor in the habit seen;
Which finds a poison in the food, that most
The temp'rature affects, There are, whose blood
Impetuous rages through the turgid veins,
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind,
Than the moist Melon, or pale Cucumber.
Of chilly nature others fly the board
Supply'd with slaughter; and the vernal powers,
For cooler, kinder, sustenance implore.
Some even the generous nutriment detest
Which, in the shell, the sleeping embroy rears.
Some, more unhappy still, repent the gifts
Of Pales; soft, delicious, and benign:
The balmy quintessence of every flower,
And every grateful herb that decks the spring;
The fost'ring dew of tender sprouting life;
The best refection of declining age;

The kind restorative of those that lie
Half dead, and panting, from the doubtful strife
Of nature struggling in the grasp of death.
Try all the bounties of this fertile globe,
There is not such a salutary food
As suits with every stomach. But (except,
Amid the mingled mass of fish and fowl,
And boil'd and bak'd, you hesitate by which
You sunk oppress'd, or whether not by all;)
Taught by experience soon you may discern
What pleases, what offends. Avoid the cates
That lull the sicken'd appetite too long;
Or heave with fev'rish flushings all the face,
Burn in the palms, and parch the roughning tongue;
Or much diminish, or too much increase
Th' expence, which nature's wise economy,
Without or waste or avarice, maintains.
Such cates abjur'd, let prouling hunger loose,
And bid the curious palate roam at will;
They scarce can err amid the various stores
That burst the teeming entrails of the world.

Led by sagacious taste, the ruthless king
Of beasts on blood and slaughter only lives;
The tiger, form'd alike to cruel meals,
Would at the manger starve: of milder seeds
The generous horse to herbage and to grain
Confines his wish; though fabling Greece resound
The Thracian steeds with human carnage wild.
Prompted by instinct's never-erring power,
Each creature knows its proper aliment;
But man, th' inhabitant of every clime,
With all the commoners of nature feeds.
Directed, bounded, by this power within,
Their cravings are well aim'd: voluptuous man
Is by superior faculties misled;
Misled from pleasure even in quest of joy.
Sated with nature's boons, what thousands seek,
With dishes tortured from their native taste,
And mad variety to spur beyond
Its wiser will the jaded appetite?
Is this for pleasure? Learn a juster taste;
And know, that temperance is true luxury.
Or is it pride? Pursue some nobler aim.
Dismiss your parasites, who praise for hire;
And earn the fair esteem of honest men,

Whose praise is fame. Form'd of such clay as yours,
The sick, the needy, shiver at your gates.
Even modest want may bless your hand unseen,
Though hush'd in patient wretchedness at home.
Is there no virgin, grac'd with every charm
But what which binds the mercenary vow?
No youth of genius, whose neglected bloom,
Unfoster'd, sickens in the barren shade?
No worthy man, by fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too generous and humane,
Constrain'd to leave his happy natal seat,
And sigh for wants more bitter than his own?
There are, while human miseries abound,
A thousand ways to waste superfluous wealth,
Without one fool or flatterer at your board,
Without one hour of sickness or disgust.

But other ills th' ambiguous feast pursue,
Besides provoking the lascivious taste.
Such various foods, though harmless each alone,
Each other violate; and oft we see
What strife is brew'd, and what pernicious bane,
From combinations of innoxious things.
Th' unbounded taste I mean not to confine
To hermit's diet, needlessly severe.
But would you long the sweets of health enjoy,
Or husband pleasure; at one impious meal
Exhaust not half the bounties of the year,
Of every realm. It matters not mean while
How much to-morrow differ from to-day;
So far indulge: 'tis fit, besides, that man,
To change obnoxious, be to change inur'd.
But stay the curious appetite, and taste
With caution fruits you never tried before.
For want of use the kindest aliment
Sometimes offends; while custom tames the rage
Of poison to mild amity with life.

So heav'n has form'd us to the general taste
Of all its gifts; so custom has improv'd
This bent of nature; that few simple foods,
Of all that earth, or air, or ocean yield,
But by excess offend. Beyond the sense
Of light refection, at the genial board
Indulge not often; nor protract the feast
To dull satiety; till soft and slow

A drowzy death creeps on, th' expansive soul
Oppress'd, and smother'd the celestial fire.
The stomach, urg'd beyond its active tone,
Hardly to nutrimental chyle subdues
The softest food: unfinish'd and deprav'd,
The chyle, in all its future wanderings, owns
Its turbid fountain; not by purer streams
So to be clear'd, but foulness will remain.
To sparkling wine what ferment can exalt
The unripen'd grape? Or what mechanic skill
From the crude ore can spin the ductile gold?

Gross riot treasures up a wealthy fund
Of plagues; but more immedicable ills
Attend the lean extreme. For physic knows
How to disburden the too tumid veins,
Even how to ripen the half-labour'd blood:
But to unlock the elemental tubes,
Collaps'd and shrunk with long inanity,
And with balsamic nutriment repair
The dried and worn-out habit, were to bid
Old age grow green, and wear a second spring;
Or the tall ash, long ravish'd from the soil,
Through wither'd veins imbibe the vernal dew.
When hunger calls, obey; nor often wait
Till hunger sharpen to corrosive pain:
For the keen appetite will feast beyond
What nature well can bear; and one extreme
Ne'er without danger meets its own reverse.
Too greedily th' exhausted veins absorb
The recent chyle, and load enfeebled powers
Off to th' extinction of the vital flame.
To the pale cities, by the firm-set siege,
And famine, humbled, may this verse be borne;
And hear, ye hardiest sons that Albion breeds,
Long toss'd and famish'd on the wintery main;
The war shook off, or hospitable shore
Attain'd, with temperance bear the shock of joy;
Nor crown with festive rites th' auspicious day:
Such feast might prove more fatal than the waves,
Than war or famine. While the vital fire
Burns feebly, heap not the green fuel on;
But prudently foment the wandering spark
With what the soonest feels its kindred touch:
Be frugal ev'n of that; a little give
At first; that kindled, add a little more;

Till, by deliberate nourishing, the flame
Reviv'd, with all its wonted vigour glows.

But tho' the two (the full and the jejune)
Extremes have each their vice; it much avails
Ever with gentle tide to ebb and flow
From this to that: So nature learns to bear
Whatever chance or headlong appetite
May bring. Besides, a meagre day subdues
The cruder clods by sloth or luxury
Collected, and unloads the wheels of life.
Sometimes a coy aversion to the feast
Comes on, while yet no blacker omen lours;
Then is a time to shun the tempting board,
Were it your natal or your nuptial day.
Perhaps a fast so seasonable starves
The latent seeds of woe, which, rooted once,
Might cost you labour. But the day return'd
Of festal luxury, the wise indulge
Most in the tender vegetable breed;
Then chiefly when the summer beams inflame
The brazen heavens; or angry Sirius sheds
A feverish taint thro' the still gulph of air.
The moist cool viands then, and flowing cup
From the fresh dairy-virgin's liberal hand,
Will save your head from harm, tho' round the world
The dreaded * Causos roll his wasteful fires.
Pale humid Winter loves the generous board,
The meal more copious, and a warmer fare;
And longs with old wood and old wine to cheer
His quaking heart. The seasons which divide
Th' empires of heat and cold; by neither claim'd,
Influenc'd by both; a middle regimen
Impose. Thro' autumn's languishing domain
Descending, nature by degrees invites
To glowing luxury. But, from the depth
Of winter when th' invigorated year
Emerges; when Favonius flush'd with love,
Toyful and young, in every breeze descends
More warm and wanton on his kindling bride;
Then, shepherds, then begin to spare your flocks;
And learn, with wise humanity, to check
The lust of blood. Now pregnant earth commits
A various offspring to th' indulgent sky:

* The burning fever.

Now bounteous nature feeds with lavish hand
The prone creation, yields what once suffic'd
Their dainty sovereign, when the world was young;
Ere yet the barbarous thirst of blood had seiz'd
The human breast. Each rolling month matures
The food that suits it most; so does each clime.

Far in the horrid realms of winter, where
Th' establish'd ocean heaps a monstrous waste
Of shining rocks and mountains to the pole;
There lives a hardy race, whose plainest wants
Relentless earth, their cruel step-mother,
Regards not. On the waste of iron fields,
Untam'd, intractable, no harvests wave:
Pomona hates them, and the clownish God
Who tends the garden. In the frozen world
Such cooling gifts were vain: a fitter meal
Is earn'd with ease; for her the fruitful spawn
Of Ocean swarms, and heaps their genial board
With generous fare and luxury profuse.
These are their bread, the only bread they know;
These, and their willing slave the deer, that crops
The shrubby herbage on their meagre hills,
Or scales, for fattening moss, the savage rocks.
Girt by the burning Zone, not thus the South
Her swarthy sons, in either Ind, maintains:
Or thirsty Libya; from whose fervid loins
The lion bursts, and every fiend that roams
Th' affrighted wilderness. The mountain herd,
Adust and dry, no sweet repast affords;
Nor does the tepid main such kinds produce,
So perfect, so delicious, as the shoals
Of icy Zembla. Rashly where the blood
Brews feverish frays; where scarce the tubes sustain
Its tumid fervour and tempestuous course;
Kind nature tempts not to such gifts as these.
But here in livid ripeness melts the Grape:
Here, finish'd by invigorating suns,
Thro' the green shade the golden Orange glows;
Spontaneous here the turgid Melon yields
A generous pulp; the Cocoa swells on high
With milky riches; and in horrid mail
The crisp Ananas wraps its poignant sweets:
Earth's vaunted progeny—In ruder air
Too coy to flourish, even too proud to live;
Or hardly rais'd by artificial fire

To vapid life. Here with a mother's smile
Glad Amalthea pours her copious horn
Here buxom Ceres reigns; Th' autumnal sea
In boundless billows fluctuates o'er their plains.
What suits the climate best, what suits the men,
Nature profuses most, and most the taste
Demands. The fountain, edg'd with racy wine
Or acid fruit, bedews their thirsty souls.
The breeze eternal breathing round their limbs
Supports in else intolerable air:
While the cool Palm, the Plantain, and the grove
That waves on gloomy Lebanon, assuage
The torrid hell that beams upon their heads.

Now come, ye Naiads, to the fountains lead;
Now let me wander through your gelid reign,
I burn to view th' enthusiastic wilds
By mortal else untrod. I hear the din
Of waters thundering o'er the ruin'd cliffs.
With holy reverence I approach the rocks
Whence glide the streams renown'd in ancient song.
Here from the desart down the rumbling steep
First springs the Nile; here bursts the sounding Po
In angry waves; Euphrates hence devolves
A mighty flood to water half the East;
And there, in Gothic solitude reclin'd,
The cheerless Tanais pours his hoary urn.
What solemn twilight! What stupendous shades
Enwrap these infant floods! Thro' every nerve
A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
Glides o'er my frame. The forest deepens round;
And more gigantic still th' impending trees
Stretch their extravagant arms athwart the gloom.
Are these the confines of some fairy world?
A land of Genii? Say, beyond these wilds
What unknown nations? If indeed beyond
Aught habitable lies. And whether leads,
To what strange regions, or of bliss or pain,
That subterraneous way? Propitious maids,
Conduct me, while with fearful steps I tread
This trembling ground. The task remains to sing.
Your gifts (so Pæan, so the powers of health
Command) to praise your crystal element:
The chief ingredient in heaven's various works;
Whose flexible genius sparkles in the gem,
Grows firm in oak, and fugitive in wine;

The vehicle, the source of nutriment
And life, to all that vegetate or live.

O comfortable streams! with eager lips
And trembling hand the languid thirsty quaff
New life in you; fresh vigour fills your veins.
No warmer cups the rural ages knew;
None warmer sought the sires of human kind.
Happy in temperate peace! Their equal days
Felt not th' alternative fits of feverish mirth,
And sick dejection, Still serene and pleas'd,
They knew no pains but what the tender soul
With pleasure yields to, and would ne'er forget.
Blest with divine immunity from ails,
Long centuries they liv'd; their only fate
was ripe old age, and rather sleep than death.
Oh! could those worthies from the world of Gods
Return to visit their degenerate sons,
How would they scorn the joys of modern time
With all our art and toil improv'd to pain!
Too happy they! But wealth brought luxury,
And luxury on sloth begot disease.

Learn temperance, friends; and hear without disdain
The choice of water. Thus the Coan * sage
Opin'd and thus the learn'd of every school.
What least of foreign principles partakes
Is best: the lightest then, what bears the touch
Of fire the least, and soonest mounts in air;
The most insipid; the most void of smell.
Such the rude mountain from his horrid sides
Pours down; such waters in the sandy vale
For ever boil, alike of winter frosts
And summer's heat secure. The crystal stream,
O'er rocks resounding, or for many a mile
Hurl'd down the pebbly channel, wholesome yields
And mellow draughts; except when winter thaws,
And half the mountains melt into the tide.
Though thirst we ne'er so resolute, avoid
The sordid lake, and all such drowsy floods
As fill from Lethe Belgia's slow canals;
With rest corrupt, with vegetation green;
Squalid with generation, and the birth
Of little monsters;) till the powers of fire

* Hippocrates.

Has from profane embraces disengag'd
The violated lymph. The virgin stream
In boiling wastes its finer soul in air.

Nothing like simple element dilutes
The food, or gives the chyle so soon to flow.
But where the stomach, indolently given,
Toys with its duty, animate with wine
Th' insipid stream; the golden Ceres yields
A more voluptuous, a more sprightly draught;
Perhaps more active. Wine unmix'd, and all
The gluey floods that from the vex'd abyss
Of fermentation spring; with spirit fraught,
And furious with intoxicating fire;
Retard concoction, and preserve unthaw'd
Th' embodied mass. You see what countless years
Embalm'd in fiery quintescence of wine,
The puny wonders of the reptile world,
The tender rudiments of life, the slim
Unravellings of minute anatomy,
Maintain their texture, and unchang'd remain.

We curse not wine: the vile excess we blame;
More fruitful than th' accumulated board,
Of pain and misery. For the subtle draught
Faster and surer, swells the vital tide;
And with more active poison, than the floods
Of grosser crudity convey, pervades
The far-remote meanders of our frame.
Ah! sly dece'ver! Branded o'er and o'er,
Yet still believ'd! Exulting o'er the wreck
Of sober views!—But the Parnassian maids
Another time *, perhaps shall sing the joys,
The fatal charms, the many woes of wine;
Perhaps its various tribes, and various powers.

Mean time, I would not always dread the bowl,
Nor every trespass shun. The feverish strife,
Rous'd by the rare debauch, subdues, expells,
The loitering crudities that burden life;
And, like a torrent full and rapid, clears
Th' obstructed tubes. Besides, this restless world
Is full of chances, which by habit's power
To learn to bear, is easier than to shun.

* See Book iv.

Ah! when ambition, meagre love of gold,
Or sacred country calls, with mellowing wine
To moisten well the thirsty suffrages:
Say how, unseason'd to the midnight frays
Of Comus and his rout, wilt thou contend
With Centaurs long to hardy deeds inur'd?
Then learn to revel; but by slow degrees:
By slow degrees the liberal arts are won;
And Hercules grew strong. But when you smooth
The brows of care, indulge your festive vein
In cups by well-inform'd experience found
The least your bane; and only with your friends.
There are sweet follies: frailties to be seen
By friends alone, and men of generous minds.

Oh! seldom may the fated hours return
Of drinking deep! I would not daily taste,
Except when life declines, even sober cups.
Weak withering age no rigid law forbids,
With frugal nectar, smooth and slow with balm,
The sapless habit daily to bedew,
And give the hesitating wheels of life
Gliblier to play. But youth has better joys:
And is it wise, when youth with pleasure flows,
To squander the reliefs of age and pain?

What dextrous thousands just within the goal
Of wild debauch direct their nightly course!
Perhaps no sickly qualms bedim their days,
No morning admonitions shock the head.
But, ah! what woes remain! life rolls apace
And that incurable disease, old age,
In youthful bodies more severely felt,
More sternly active, shakes their blasted prime:
Except kind nature by some hasty blow
Prevent the lingering fates. For know whate'er
Beyond its natural fervour hurries on
The sanguine tide; whether the frequent bowl,
High-season'd fare, or exercise to toil
Protracted; spurs to its last stage tir'd life,
And sows the temples with untimely snow.
When life is new, the ductile fibres feel
The heart's increasing force; and, day by day,
The growth advances; till the larger tubes,

Acquiring (from their * elemental veins,
Condens'd to solid chords) a firmer tone,
Sustain, and just sustain, th' impetuous blood.
Here stops the growth. With overbearing pulse
And pressure, still the great destroy the small;
Still with the ruins of the small grow strong.
Life glows mean time, amid the grinding force
Of viscous fluids and elastic tubes;
Its various functions vigorously are plied
By strong machinery; and in solid health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er disease.
But the full ocean ebbs; there is a point,
By nature fix'd, whence life must downward tend.
For still the beating tide consolidates
The stubborn vessels, more reluctant still
To the weak throbs of th' ill-supported heart.
This languishing, these strength'ning by degrees
To hard unyielding unelastic bone,
Through tedious channels the congealing flood
Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on;
It loiters still: and now it stirs no more.
This is the period few attain; the death
Of nature; thus (so heav'n ordain'd it) life
Destroys itself; and could these laws have chang'd
Nestor might now the fates of Troy relate;
And Homer live immortal as his song.

What does not fade? The tower that long had stood
The crush of thunder and the warring winds,
Shook by the slow but sure destroyer Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base.
And flinty pyramids, and walls of brass,
Descend: the Babylonian spires are sunk;
Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down.

* In the human body, as well as in those of other animals, the larger blood vessels are composed of smaller ones; which, by the violent motion and pressure of the fluids in the large vessels, lose their cavities by degrees, and degenarate into impervious chords or fibres. In proportion as these small vessels become solid, the larger must of course grow less extensile, more rigid, and make a stronger resistance to the action of the heart, and force of the blood. From this gradual condensation of the smaller vessels, and consequent rigidity of the larger one, the progress of the human body, from infancy to old age, is accounted for.

Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
And tottering empires rush by their own weight.
This huge rotundity we trade grows old;
And all those worlds that roll around the sun,
The Sun himself, shall die, and antient Night
Again involve the desolate abyss:
Till the great FATHER thro' the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws.
For thro' the regions of unbounded space,
Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
BEING, in various systems, fluctuates still
Between creation and abhor'd decay:
It ever did; perhaps and ever will.
New worlds are still emerging from the deep;
The old descending, in their turns to rise.

BOOK III.

EXERCISE.

THRO' various toils th' adventurous Muse has past;
But half the toil, and more than half, remains.
Rude is her theme, and hardly fit for Song;
Plain and of little ornament; and I
But little practis'd in th' Aonian arts,
Yet not in vain such labours have we tried,
If aught these lays the fickle health confirm.
To you, ye delicate, I write; for you
I tame my youth to philosophic cares,
And grow still paler by the midnight lamps.
Not to debilitate with timorous rules
A hardy frame; nor needlessly to brave
Unglorious dangers, proud of mortal strength;
Is all the lesson that in wholesome years
Concerns the strong. His care were ill bestow'd
Who would with warm effeminacy nurse
The thriving oak which on the mountain's brow
Bears all the blasts that sweep the wintry heav'n.

Behold the labourer of the glebe who toils
In dust, in rain, in cold and sultry skies:
Save but the grain from mildews and the flood,
Nought anxious he what sickly stars ascend.
He knows no laws by Esculapius given;
He studies none. Yet him nor midnight fogs
Infest, nor those envenom'd shafts that fly
When rapid Sirius fires the autumnal noon.
His habit pure with plain and temperate meals,
Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd

To every casualty of varied life ;
Serene he bears the peevish eastern blast
And uninfected breathes the mortal south.

Such the reward of rude and sober life ;
Of labour such. By health the peasant's toil
Is well repaid ; if exercise were pain
Indeed, and temperance pain. By arts like these
Laconia nurs'd of old her hardy sons ;
And Rome's unconquer'd legions urg'd their way,
Unhurt, through every toil in every clime.

Toil, and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves
Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone ;
The greener juices are by toil subdu'd,
Mellow'd, and subtilis'd ; the vapid old
Expell'd, and all the rancour of the blood.
Come, my companions, ye who feel the charms
Of nature and the year ; come, let us stray
Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk :
Come, while the soft voluptuous breezes fan
The fleecy heavens, enwrap the limbs in balm,
And shed a charming langour o'er the soul.
Nor when bright Winter sows with prickly frost
The vigorous ether, in unmanly warmth
Indulge at home ; nor even when Eurus' blasts
This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.
My liberal walks, save when the skies in rain
Or fogs relent, no season should confine
Or to the cloister'd gallery or arcade.
Go, climb the mountain ; from th' ethereal source
Imbibe the recent gale. The cheerful morn
Beams o'er the hills ; go, mount th' exulting steed.
Already, see, the deep-mouth'd beagles catch
The tainted mazes ; and, on eager sport
Intent, with emulous impatience try
Each doubtful trace. Or, if a nobler prey
Delight you more, go chase the desperate deer ;
And through its deepest solitude awake
The vocal forest with the jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale
Exceed your strength ; a sport of less fatigue,
Not less delightful, the prolific stream
Affords. The crystal rivulet, that o'er
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze

Swarms with the silver fry. Such, thro' the bounds
Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such
The Esk, o'erhung with woods; and such the stream
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,
Liddal; till now, except in Doric lays
Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,
Unknown in song: though not a purer stream,
Thro' meads more flowery, or more romantic groves,
Roll's toward the western main. Hail, sacred flood!
May still thy hospitable swains be blest
In rural innocence; thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish; and thy vales look gay
With painted meadows, and the golden grain!
Oft, with thy blooming sons, when life was new
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd:
Oft trac'd with patient steps thy fairy banks,
With the well-imitated fly to hook
The eager trout, and with the slender line
And yielding rod solicit to the shore
The struggling, panting prey: while vernal clouds
And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool,
And from the deeps call'd forth the wanton swarms.

Form'd on the Samian school, or those of Ind,
There are who think these pastimes scarce humane.
Yet in my mind (and not relentless I)
His life is pure that wears no fouler stains.
But if, thro' genuine tenderness of heart,
Or secret want of relish for the game,
You shun the glories of the chase, nor care
To haunt the peopled stream; the garden yields
A soft amusement, an humane delight.
To raise the insipid nature of the ground;
Or tame its savage genius to the grace
Of careless sweet rusticity, that seems
The amiable result of happy chance,
To create; and gives a god-like joy,
Which every year improves. Nor thou disdain
To check the lawless riot of the trees,
To plant the grove, or turn the barren mould.
O happy he! whom, when his years decline,
(His fortune and his fame by worthy means
Attain'd, and equal to his moderate mind;

His life approv'd by all the wise and good,
Even envied by the vain) the peaceful groves
Of Epicurus, from this stormy world,
Receive to rest; of all ungrateful cares
Absolv'd, and sacred from the selfish crowd.
Happiest of men! if the same soil invites
A chosen few, companions of his youth,
Once fellow-rakes perhaps, now rural friends;
With whom, in easy commerce, to pursue
Nature's free charms, and vie for sylvan fame:
A fair ambition; void of strife or guile,
Or jealousy, or pain to be outdone.
Who plans th' enchanted garden, who directs
The vista best, and best conducts the stream;
Whose groves the fastest thicken and ascend;
Who first the welcome spring salutes; who shews
The earliest bloom, the sweetest proudest charms
Of Flora; who best gives Pomona's juice
To match the sprightly genius of Champaign.
Thrice happy days! in rural business past;
Blest winter nights! when, as the genial fire
Cheers the wide hall, his cordial family
With soft domestic arts the hours beguile,
And pleasing talk that starts no timorous fame,
With witless wantoness to hunt it down:
Or through the fairy-land of tale or song
Delighted, wander, in fictitious fates
Engag'd, and all that strikes humanity:
Till lost in fable, they the stealing hour
Of timely rest forget. Sometimes, at eve,
His neighbours lift the latch, and bless unbid
His festal roof; while, o'er the light repast,
And sprightly cups, they mix in social joy;
And, thro' the maze of conversation trace
Whate'er amuses or improves the mind.
Sometimes at eve (for I delight to taste
The native zest and flavour of the fruit,
Where sense grows wild and takes of no manure)
The decent, honest, cheerful husbandman
Should drown his labour in my friendly bowl;
And at my table find himself at home.

Whate'er you study, in whate'er you sweat,
Indulge your taste. Some love the manly foils;
The tennis some; and some the graceful dance.
Others, more hardy, range the purple heath,
Or naked stubble; where from field to field

The sounding coveys urge their labouring flight:
Eager amid the rising cloud to pour
The gun's unerring thunder; and there are
Whom still the meed * of the green archer charms.
He chooses best, whose labour entertains
His vacant fancy most: the toil you hate
Fatigues you soon, and scarce improves your limbs.

As beauty still has blemish; and the mind
The most accomplish'd its imperfect side;
Few bodies are there of that happy mould
But some one part is weaker than the rest:
The legs, perhaps, or arms refuse their load,
Or the chest labours. These assidiously,
But gently, in their proper arts employ'd,
Acquire a vigour and elastic spring
To which they were not born. But weaker parts
Abhor fatigue and violent discipline.

Begin with gentle toils; and, as your nerves,
Grow firm, to hardier by just steps aspire.
The prudent, even in every moderate walk,
At first but saunter; and by slow degrees
Increase their pace. This doctrine of the wise
Well knows the master of the flying steed.
First from the goal the manag'd courses play
On bended reins; as yet the skilful youth
Repress their foamy pride; but every breath
The race grows warmer, and the tempest swells;
Till all the fiery mettle has its way,
And the thick thunder hurries o'er the plain.
When all at once from indolence to toil
You spring, the fibres by the hasty shock
Are tir'd and crack'd, before their unctuous coats,
Compress'd, can pour the lubricating balm.
Besides, collected in the passive veins,
The purple mass a sudden torrent rolls,
O'erpowers the heart, and deluges the lungs
With dangerous inundation: oft the source
Of fatal woes; a cough that foams with blood,
Asthma, and feller † Peripneumony,
Or the slow minings of the hectic fire.

* This word is much used by some of the old English poets, and signifies *reward* or *prize*.

† The inflammation of the lungs.

Th' athletic Fool, to whom what heav'n deny'd
Of soul is well compensated in limbs,
Oft from his rage, or brainless frolic, feels
His vegetation and brute force decay.
The men of better clay and finer mould
Know nature, feel the human dignity;
And scorn to vie with oxen or with apes.
Pursu'd prolixly, even the gentlest toil
Is waste of health: repose by small fatigue
Is earn'd; and (where your habit is not prone
To thaw) by the first moisture of the brows.
The fine and subtle spirits cost too much
To be profus'd, too much the roscid balm.
But when the hard varieties of life
You toil to learn; or try the dusky chase,
Or the warm deeds of some important day:
Hot from the field, indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose; nor court the fanning gale,
Nor court the spring. O! by the sacred tears
Of widows, orphans, mothers, sisters, sires,
Forbear! No other pestilence has driven
Such Myriads o'er th' irremeable deep.
Why this so fatal, the sagacious Muse
Thro' nature's cunning labyrinths could trace:
But there are secrets which who knows not now,
Must, ere he reach them, climb the heapy Alps
Of science; and devote seven years to toil.
Besides, I would not stun your patient ears
With what it little boots you to attain.
He knows enough, the mariner, who knows
Where lurk the shelves, and where the whirlpools boil,
What signs portend the storm: to subtler minds
He leaves to scan, from what mysterious cause
Charybdis rages in th' Ionian wave;
Whence neither oar nor sail can stem; and why
The roughening deep expects the storm, as sure
As red Orion mounts the shrouded heaven.

In antient times, when Rome with Athens vied
For polish'd luxury and useful arts;
All hot and reeking from the Olympic strife,
And warm Palestra, in the tepid bath
Th' athletic youth relax'd their weary limbs.
Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful pow'rs
Of Nard and Cassia fraught, to sooth and heal
The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime

Not much invites us to such arts as these.
'Tis not for those, whom gelid skies embrace.
And chilling fogs; whose perspiration feels
Such frequent bars from Eurus and the North;
'Tis not for those to cultivate a skin
Too soft; or teach the recremental fume
Too fast to crowd through such precarious ways.
For thro' the small arterial mouths, that pierce
In endless millions the close-woven skin,
The baser fluids in a constant stream
Escape, and viewless melt into the winds.
While this eternal, this most copious waste
Of blood, degenerate into vapid brine,
Maintains its wonted measure, all the powers
Of health befriend you, all the wheels of life
With ease and pleasure move; but this restrain'd
Or more or less, so more or less you feel
The functions labour, from this fatal source
What woes descend is never to be sung.
To take their numbers were to count the sands
That ride in whirlwind the parch'd Libyan air;
Or waves that, when the blustering North embroils
The Baltic, thunder on the German shore.
Subject not then by soft emollient arts
This grand expence, on which your fates depend,
To every caprice of the sky; nor thwait
The genius of your clime: for from the blood
Least fickle rise the recremental steams,
And least obnoxious to the styptic air,
Which breathe thro' straiter and more callous pores.
The temper'd Scythian hence, half naked treads
His boundless snows, nor rues th' inclement heaven;
And hence our painted ancestors defied
The East: nor curs'd, like us, their fickle sky.

The body, moulded by the clime, endures
Th' Equator heats or Hyperborean frost:
Except by habits foreign to its turn,
Unwise you counteract its forming pow'r.
Rude at the first, the winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance: study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun.
Against the rigours of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies, some frequent
The gelid cistern; and, where nought forbids,

I praise their dauntless heart: A frame so steel'd
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts
That breathe the Tertian or fell Rheumatism;
The nerves so temper'd, never quit their tone,
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts.
But all things have their bounds: and he who makes,
By daily use, the kindest regimen
Essential to his health, should never mix
With human kind, nor art nor trade pursue.
He not the safe vicissitude of life
Without some shock endures; ill-fitted he
To want the known, or bear unusual things.
Besides, the powerful remedies of pain
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)
Should never with your prosperous days of health
Grow too familiar: for by frequent use
The strongest medicines lose their healing power,
And even the surest poisons theirs to kill.

Let those who from the frozen Arctos reach
Parch'd Mauritania, or the sultry West,
Or the wide flood through rich Indostan roll'd,
Plunge thrice a day, and in the tepid wave
Untwist their stubborn pores; that full and free
Th' evaporation through the soften'd skin
May bear proportion to the swelling blood.
So shall they 'scape the fever's rapid flames;
So feel untainted the hot breath of hell.
With us, the man of no complaint demands
The warm ablution just enough to clear
The sluices of the skin, enough to keep
The body sacred from indecent soil.
Still to be pure, even did it not conduce
(As much it does) to health, were greatly worth
Your daily pains. 'Tis this adorns the rich;
The want of this is Poverty's worst woe;
With this external virtue age maintains
A decent grace; without it youth and charms
Are loathsome. This the venal Graces know;
So doubtless do your wives: for married sires,
As well as lovers, still pretend to taste;
Nor is it less (all prudent wives can tell)
To lose a husband's than a lover's heart.

But now the hours and seasons when to toil
From foreign themes recall my wandering song.

Some labour fasting, or but slightly fed,
To lull the grinding stomach's hungry rage.
Where nature feeds too corpulent a frame
'Tis wisely done: for while the thirsty veins
Impatient of lean penury, devour
The treasur'd oil, then is the happiest time
To shake the lazy balsam from its cells.
Now while the stomach from the full repast
Subsides, but ere returning hunger gnaws,
Ye leaner habits, give an hour to toil:
And ye whom no luxuriancy of growth
Oppresses yet, or threatens to oppress.
But from the recent meal no labours please,
Of limbs or mind. For now the cordial powers
Claim all the wandering spirits to a work
Of strong and subtle toil, and great event:
A work of time: and you may rue the day
You hurried, with untimely exercise,
A half-concocted chyle into the blood.
The body overcharg'd with unctuous phlegm
Much toil demands: the lean elastic less.
While winter chills the blood, and binds the veins,
No labours are too hard: by those you 'scape
The slow diseases of the torpid year;
Endless to name; to one of which alone,
To that which tears the nerves, the toil of slaves
Is pleasure; Oh! from such inhuman pains
May all be free who merit not the wheel:
But from the burning Lion when the sun
Pours down his sultry wrath; now while the blood
Too much already maddens in the veins,
And all the finer fluids through the skin
Explore their flight; me, near the cool cascade
Reclin'd or sauntring in the lofty grove,
No needless slight occasion should engage
To pant and sweat beneath the fiery noon.
Now the fresh morn alone and mellow eve
To shady walks and active rural sports
Invite. But, while the chilling dews descend,
May nothing tempt you to the cold embrace
Of humid skies; though 'tis no vulgar joy
To trace the horrors of the solemn wood
While the soft evening saddens into night:
Though the sweet Poet of the vernal groves
Melts all the night in strains of am'rous woe.

The shades descend, and midnight o'er the world
Expands her sable wings. Great Nature droops
Through all her works. Now happy he whose toil
Has o'er his languid powerless limbs diffus'd
A pleasing lassitude: he not in vain
Invokes the gentle Deity of dreams.
His powers the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose: on him the balmy dews
Of Sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion; or on Fancy's wings
Visit the paradise of happy Dreams,
And waken cheerful as the lively morn;
Oppress not Nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full:
But be the first concoction half-matur'd
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toils
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires, whom trembling from the tower that rocks
Amid the clouds, or Calpe's hideous height,
The busy dæmons hurl; or in the main
O'erwhelm; or bury struggling under ground.
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes
Can counterpoise of that most wretched man,
Whose nights are shaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Orestes; whose delirious brain,
Stung by the Furies, works with poison'd thought:
While pale and monstrous painting shocks the soul;
And mangled consciousness bemoans itself
For ever torn; and chaos floating round.
What dreams presage, what dangers these or those
Portend to sanity, though prudent seers
Reveal'd of old, and men of deathless fame,
We would not to the superstitious mind
Suggest new throbs, new vanities of fear.
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To banish omens and all restless woes.

In study some protract the silent hours,
Which others consecrate to mirth and wine;
And sleep till noon, and hardly live till night:
But surely this redeems not from the shades
One hour of life. Nor does it nought avail
What season you to drowsy Morpheus give
Of th' ever-varying circle of the day;

Or whether, through the tedious winter gloom,
You tempt the midnight or the morning damps.
The body, fresh and vigorous from repose,
Defies the early fogs: but, by the toils
Of wakeful day, exhausted and unstrung,
Weakly resists the night's unwholesome breath.
The grand discharge, th' effusion of the skin,
Slowly impair'd, the languid maladies
Creep on, and through the sinking functions steal.
So, when the chilling East invades the spring,
The delicate Narcissus pines away
In hectic languor: and a slow disease
Taints all the family of flowers, condemn'd
To cruel heav'ns. But why, already prone
To fade, should beauty cherish its own bane?
O shame! O pity! nipt with pale quadrille,
And midnight cares, the bloom of Albion dies!

By toil subdu'd, the warrior and the hind
Sleep fast and deep: their active functions soon
With generous streams the subtle tubes supply;
And soon the tonic, irritable nerves
Feel the fresh impulse, and awake the soul.
The sons of indolence, with long repose,
Grow torpid; and with slowest Lethe drunk,
Feebly and lingringly return to life,
Blunt every sense and pow'rless every limb.
Ye prone to sleep, (whom sleeping most annoys)
On the hard mattress or elastic couch
Extend your limbs, and wean yourselves from sloth;
Nor grudge the lean projector, of dry brain
And springy nerves, the blandishments of down:
Nor envy, while the buried bacchanal
Exhales his surfeit in prolixer dreams.

He, without riot, in the balmy feast
Of life, the wants of nature has supply'd,
Who rises cool, serene, and full of soul.
But pliant nature more or less demands,
As custom forms her; and all sudden change
She hates of habit, even from bad to good.
If faults in life, or new emergencies,
From habits urge you by long time confirm'd,
Slow may the change arrive, and stage by stage;
Slow as the shadow o'er the dial moves,
Slow as the stealing progress of the year.

Observe the circling year. How unperceiv'd
Her seasons change! Behold! by slow degrees,
Stern Winter tam'd into a ruder Spring;
The ripen'd Spring a milder Summer glows;
Departing Summer sheds Pomona's store;
And aged Autumn brews the winter-storm.
Slow as they come, these changes come not void
Of mortal shocks: the cold and torrid reigns,
The two great periods of th' important year,
Are in their first approaches seldom safe:
Funeral Autumn all the sickly dread,
And the black fates deform the lovely Spring.
He well-advis'd, who taught our wiser sires
Early to borrow Muscovy's warm spoils,
Ere the first frost has touch'd the tender blade;
And late resign them, though the wanton Spring
Should deck her charms with all her sister's rays.
For while the effluence of the skin maintains
Its native measure, the pleuritic Spring
Glides harmless by; and Autumn, sick to death
With sallow Quartans, no contagion breathes

I in prophetic numbers could unfold
The omens of the year: what seasons teem
With what diseases; what the humid South
Prepares, and what the Dæmon of the East:
But you perhaps refuse the tedious song.
Besides, whatever plagues, in heat, or cold,
Or drought, or moisture, dwell, they hurt not you
Skill'd to correct the vices of the sky,
And taught already how to each extreme
To bend your life. But should the public bane
Infect you; or some tresspass of your own,
Or flaw of nature, hint mortality:
Soon as a not unpleasing horror glides
Along the spine, thro' all your torpid limbs;
When first the head throbs, or the stomach feels
A sickly load, a weary pain the loins;
Be Celsus call'd; the Fates come rushing on;
The rapid Fates admit of no delay.
While wilful you, and fatally secure,
Expect to-morrow's more auspicious sun,
The growing pest, whose infancy was weak
And easy vanquish'd, with triumphant sway
O'erpow'rs your life. For want of timely care,
Millions have died of medicable wounds.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engaged!
What slight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
The hardiest frame! of indolence, of toil,
We die; of want, of superfluity:
The all-surrounding heaven, the vital air,
Is big with death. And though the putrid South
Be shut; though no convulsive agony
Shake, from the deep foundations of the world,
Th' imprisoned plagues; a secret venom oft
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land.
What living deaths has sad Byzantium seen!
How oft has Cairo, with a mother's woe,
Wept o'er her slaughter'd sons and lonely streets!
Even Albion, girt with less malignant skies,
Albion the poison of the Gods has drunk,
And felt the sting of monsters all her own.

Ere yet the fell Plantagenets had spent
Their ancient rage, at Bosworth's purple field;
While, for which tyrant England should receive,
Her legions in incestuous murders mix'd,
And daily horrors, till the [illegible]
With kindred blood by kindred hands profus'd;
Another plague of more gigantic arm
Arose, a monster never known before,
Rear'd from Cocytus its portentous head.
This rapid Fury, not like other pests,
Pursu'd a gradual course, but in a day
Rush'd as a storm o'er half the astonish'd isle,
And strew'd with sudden carcases the land.

First through the shoulders, or whatever part
Was seiz'd the first, a fervid vapour sprung.
With rash combustion thence, the quivering spark
Shot to the heart, and kindled all within;
And soon the surface caught the spreading fires.
Gush'd out in smoky sweats; but nought assuag'd
The torrid heat within, nor aught reliev'd
The stomach's anguish. With incessant toil,
Desperate of ease, impatient of their pain,
They toss'd from side to side. In vain the stream
Ran full and clear, they burnt and thirsted still.
The restless arteries with rapid blood
Beat strong and frequent. Thick and pantingly
The breath was fetch'd, and with huge lab'rings heav'd.
At last a heavy pain oppress'd the head,

A wild delirium came; their weeping friends
Were strangers now, and this no home of theirs.
Harass'd with toil on toil, the sinking powers
Lay prostrate and o'erthrown; a ponderous sleep
Wrap all the senses up: they slept and died.

In some a gentle horror crept at first
O'er all the limbs; the sluices of the skin
Withheld their moisture, till, by art provok'd,
The sweats o'erflow'd; but in a clammy tide:
Now free and copious, now restrain'd and slow;
Of tinctures various, as the temperature
Had mix'd the blood; and rank with fetid steams:
As if the pent-up humours, by delay
Were grown more fell, more putrid, and malign.
Here lay their hopes (tho' little hope remaind) 576
With full effusion of perpetual sweats
To drive the venom out. And here the fates
Were kind, that long they linger'd not in pain.
For, who survivd the sun's diurnal race, 580
Rose from the dreary gates of hell redeem'd:
Some the sixth hour oppress'd, and some the third.

Of many thousands few untainted 'scap'd;
Of those infected fewer 'scap'd alive:
Of those who liv'd, some felt a second blow; 585
And whom the second spar'd, a third destroy'd.
Frantic with fear, they sought by flight to shun
The fierce contagion. O'er the mournful land
Th' infected city pour'd her hurrying swarms:
Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her seats around,
Th' infected country rush'd into the town. 591
Some, sad at home, and in the desert some,
Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind:
In vain: where'er they fled, the Fates pursued.
Others, with hopes more specious, cross'd the main,
To seek protection in far-distant skies; 596
But none they found. It seem'd the general air,
From pole to pole, from Atlas to the East,
Was then at enmity with English blood.
For, but the race of England, all were safe
In foreign climes; nor did this fury taste 600
The foreign blood which England then contain'd.
Where should they fly? The circumambient heaven
Involv'd them still; and every breeze was bane.
Where find relief? The salutary art

Was mute; and, startled at the new disease,
In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.
To Heaven with suppliant rites they sent their pray'rs;
Heav'n heard them not. Of every hope depriv'd;
Fatigu'd with vain resources; and subdued
With woes resistless and enfeebling fear;
Passive they sunk beneath the weighty blow.
Nothing but lamentable sounds was heard,
Nor aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
Infectious horror ran from face to face,
And pale despair. 'Twas all the business then
To tend the sick, and in their turns to die.
In heaps they fell: and oft one bed, they say,
The sick'ning, dying, and the dead contain'd.

Thou guardian God, on whom the fates depend
Of tottering Albion! ye eternal Fires
That lead thro' heav'n the wandering year! ye Powers
That o'er th' incircling elements preside!
May nothing worse than what this age has seen
Arrive! Enough abroad, enough at home
Has Albion bled. Here a distemper'd heav'n
Has thin'd her cities; from those lofty cliffs
That awe proud Gaul, to Thule's wintry reign;
While in the West, * beyond th' Atlantic foam,
Her bravest sons, keen for the fight, have dy'd
The death of cowards, and of common men:
Sunk void of wounds, and fall'n without renown.

But from these views the weeping Muses turn,
And other themes invite my wandering song.

* This was written not long after the memorable mortality happened amongst the British sailors, under admiral Hosier, in the West-Indies.

BOOK IV.

THE PASSIONS.

THE choice of Aliment, the choice of Air,
The use of Toil and all external things,
Already sung; it now remains to trace
What good, what evil from ourselves proceeds:
And how the subtle Principle within
Inspires with health, or mines with strange decay
The passive body. Ye poetic Shades,
That know the secrets of the world unseen,
Assist my song! For, in a doubtful theme
Engag'd, I wander thro' mysterious ways.

There is, they say, (and I believe there is)
A spark within us of th' immortal fire,
That animates and moulds the grosser frame;
And, when the body sinks, escapes to heaven,
Its native seat, and mixes with the Gods.
Mean while this heavenly particle pervades
The mortal elements: in every nerve
It thrills with pleasure, or grows mad with pain.
And, in its secret conclave, as it feels
The body's woes and joys, this ruling power
Wields at its will the dull material world,
And is the body's health or malady.

By its own toil the gross corporeal frame
Fatigues, extenuates, or destroys itself.
Nor less the labours of the mind corrode
The solid fabric: for by subtle parts,
And viewless atoms, secret Nature moves

The mighty wheels of this stupendous world.
By subtle fluids pour'd thro' subtle tubes
The natural, vital, functions are perform'd.
By these the stubborn aliments are tam'd;
The toiling heart distributes life and strength;
These the still-crumbling frame rebuild; and these
Are lost in thinking, and dissolve in air.

But 'tis not Thought (for still the soul's employ'd)
'Tis painful thinking that corrodes our clay.
All day the vacant eye without fatigue
Strays o'er the heaven and earth; but, long intent
On microscopic arts, its vigour fails.
Just so the mind, with various thought amus'd,
Nor akes itself, nor gives the body pain.
But anxious Study, Discontent, and Care,
Love without hope, and Hate without revenge,
And Fear, and Jealousy, fatigue the soul,
Engross the subtle ministers of life,
And spoil the lab'ring functions of their share.
Hence the lean gloom that Melancholy wears;
The Lover's paleness; and the sallow hue
Of Envy, Jealousy; the meagre stare
Of sore revenge: the canker'd body hence
Betrays each fretful motion of the mind.

The strong-built pedant, who, both night and day,
Feeds on the coarsest fare the schools bestow,
And crudely fattens at gross Burman's stall;
O'erwhelm'd with phlegm, lies in a dropsy drown'd,
Or sinks in lethargy before his time.
With useful studies you, and arts that please,
Employ your mind, amuse but not fatigue.
Peace to each drowsy metaphysic sage!
And ever may all heavy systems rest!
Yet some there are, even of elastic parts,
Whom strong and obstinate ambition leads
Through all the rugged roads of barren lore,
And gives to relish what their generous taste
Would else refuse. But may nor thirst of fame,
Nor love of knowledge, urge you to fatigue
With constant drudgery the liberal soul.
Toy with your books: and as the various fits
Of humour seize you, from Philosophy
To Fable shift; from serious Antonine
To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song.

While reading pleases, but no longer, read;
And read aloud resounding Homer's strain,
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
The chest so exercis'd improves its strength:
And quick vibrations through the bowels drive
The restless blood, which, in unactive days,
Would loiter else through unelastic tubes.
Deem it not trifling while I recommend
What posture suits: to stand and sit by turns,
As nature prompts, is best. But o'er your leaves
To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machinery of its play.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind. For ever on pursuit
Of knowledge bent, it starves the gosser powers;
Quite unemploy'd, against its own repose
It turns its fatal edge, and sharper pangs
Than what the body knows embitter life.
Chiefly where solitude, sad nurse of Care,
To sickly musing gives the pensive mind.
There madness enters; and the dim-ey'd Fiend
Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
Her own eternal wound. The sun grows pale;
A mournful visionary light o'erspreads
The cheerful face of nature: earth becomes
A dreary desert, and heaven frowns above.
Then various shapes of curs'd illusion rise:
Whate'er the wretched fears, creating Fear
Forms out of nothing; and with monsters teems
Unknown in hell. The prostrate soul beneath
A load of huge imagination heaves;
And all the horrors that the murderer feels
With anxious flutterings wake the guiltless breast.

Such phantoms Pride in solitary scenes,
Or fear, on delicate Self-love creates.
From other cares absolv'd, the busy mind
Finds in yourself a theme to pore upon;
It finds you miserable, or makes you so.
For while yourself you anxiously explore,
Timorous Self-love, with sicking Fancy's aid,
Presents the danger that you dread the most,
And ever galls you in your tender part.
Hence some for love, and some for jealousy,
For grim religion some, and some for pride,

Have lost their reason: some for fear of want
Want all their lives: and others every day
For fear of dying suffer worse than death.
Ah! from your bosoms banish, if you can,
Those fatal guests: and first the Demon Fear;
That trembles at impossible events,
Lest aged Atlas should resign his load,
And heaven's eternal battlements rush down.
Is there an evil worse than Fear itself?
And what avails it, that indulgent heaven
From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,
If we, ingenious to torment ourselves,
Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own?
Enjoy the present; nor with needless cares,
Of what may spring from blind misfortune's womb,
Appal the surest hour that life bestows.
Serene, and master of yourself, prepare
For what may come; and leave the rest to Heaven.

Oft from the Body, by long ails mistun'd,
These evils sprung, the most important health,
That of the mind, destroy: and when the mind
They first invade, the conscious body soon
In sympathetic languishment declines.
These chronic passions, while from real woes
They rise, and yet without the body's fault
Infest the soul, admit one only cure;
Diversion, hurry, and a restless life.
Vain are the consolations of the wise;
In vain your friends would reason down your pain.
O ye, whose souls relentless love has tam'd
To soft distress, or friends untimely slain!
Court not the luxury of tender thought!
Nor deem it impious to forget those pains
That hurt the living, nought avail the dead.
Go, soft enthusiast! quit the cypress groves,
Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune
Your sad complaint. Go, seek the cheerful haunts
Of men, and mingle with the bustling croud;
Lay schemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wish
Of nobler minds, and push them night and day.
Or join the caravan in quest of scenes
New to your eyes, and shifting every hour,
Beyond the Alps, beyond the Apennines.
Or more advent'rous, rush into the field
Where war grows hot; and raging through the sky,

The lofty trumpet swells the madd'ning soul:
And in the hardy camp and toilsome march
Forget all softer and less manly cares.

But most too passive, when the blood runs low,
Too weakly indolent to strive with pain,
And bravely by resisting conquer Fate,
Try C rce's arts; and in the tempting bowl
Of poison'd nectar sweet oblivion swill.
Struck by the pow'rful charm, the gloom dissolves
In empty air; Elysium opens round.
A pleasing phrenzy buoys the lighten'd soul,
And sanguine hopes dispel your fleeting care;
And what was difficult, and what was dire,
Yields to your prowess and superior stars:
The happiest you of all that e'er were mad,
Or are, or shall be, could this folly last.
But soon your heaven is gone; a heavier gloom
Shuts o'er your head: and as the thund'ring stream,
Swoln o'er its banks with sudden mountain rain,
Sinks from its tumult to a silent brook;
So, when the frantic raptures in your breast
Subside, you languish into mortal man;
You sleep, and waking find yourself undone.
For, prodigal of life, in one rash night
You lavish'd more than might support three days.
A heavy morning comes; your cares return
With tenfold rage. An anxious stomach well
May be endur'd; so may the throbbing head:
But such a dim delirium, such a dream,
Involves you; such a dastardly despair
Unmans your soul, as madd'ning Pentheus felt,
When baited round Cithæron's cruel sides,
He saw two suns, and double Thebes ascend.
You curse the sluggish Port; you curse the wretch,
The felon, with unnatural mixture first
Who dar'd to violate the virgin Wine.
Or on the fugitive Champaign you pour
A thousand curses; for to heav'n it rapt
Your soul, to plunge you deeper in despair.
Perhaps you rue even that divinest gift,
The gay, serene, good-natur'd Burgundy,
Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine:
And wish that heaven from mortals had with-held
The grape, and all intoxicating bowls.

Besides it wounds you sore to recollect
What follies in your loose unguarded hour
Escap'd. For one irrevocable word,
Perhaps that meant no harm, you lose a friend.
Or, in the rage of wine, your hasty hand
Performs a deed to haunt you to your grave.
Add that your means, your health, your parts decay;
Your friends avoid you; or if one remains
To wish you well, he wishes you in heaven.
Despis'd, unwept you fall; who might have left
A sacred, cherish'd, sadly-pleasing name;
A name still to be utter'd with a sigh.
Your last ungrateful scene has quite effac'd
All sense and memory of your former worth.

How to live happiest; how avoid the pains,
The disappointments, and disgusts of those
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ;
The precepts here of a divine old man
I could recite. Though old, he still retain'd
His manly sense, and energy of mind.
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
He still remember'd that he once was young;
His easy presence check'd no decent joy.
Him even the dissolute admir'd; for he
A graceful looseness when he pleas'd put on,
And laughing could instruct. Much had he read,
Much more had seen; he studied from the life,
And in th' original perus'd mankind.

Vers'd in the woes and vanities of life,
He pitied Man: and much he pitied those
Whom falsely-smiling Fate has curs'd with means
To dissipate their days in quest of joy.
Our aim is happiness: 'tis yours, 'tis mine,
He said' 'tis the pursuit of all that live;
Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attain'd.
But they the widest wander from the mark,
Who through the flow'ry paths of saunt'ring Joy
Seek this coy Goddess; that from stage to stage
Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue.
For, not to name the pains that pleasure brings
To counterpoise itself, relentless Fate
Forbids that we through gay voluptuous wilds
Should ever roam; and were the fates more kind,
Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale.

Were these exhaustless, Nature would grow sick,
And, cloy'd with pleasure, squeamishly complain
That all was vanity, and life a dream.
Let nature rest; be busy for yourself,
And for your friend; be busy even in vain
Rather than teize her sated appetites.
Who never fasts, no banquet e'er enjoys:
Who never toils or watches, never sleeps.
Let nature rest: and when the taste of joy
Grows keen, indulge; but shun satiety.

'Tis not for mortals always to be blest.
But him the least the dull or painful hours
Of life oppress, whom sober Sense conducts,
And Virtue, through this labyrinth we tread.
Virtue and Sense I mean not to disjoin;
Virtue and Sense are one: and, trust me, still
A faithless Heart betrays the Head unsound.
Virtue (for mere Good-nature is a fool)
Is sense and spirit, with humanity:
'Tis sometimes angry, and its frown confounds;
'Tis even vindictive, but in vengeance just.
Knaves fain would laugh at it; some great ones dare;
But at his heart the most undaunted son
Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.
To noblest uses this determines wealth;
This is the solid pomp of prosperous days;
The peace and shelter of adversity.
And if you pant for glory, build your fame
On this foundation, which the secret shock
Defies of Envy and all-sapping Time.
The gawdy gloss of Fortune only strikes
The vulgar eye: the suffrage of the wise,
The praise that's worth ambition, is attain'd
By sense alone, and dignity of mind.

Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of heaven: a happiness
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great Nature's favourites: a wealth
That ne'er encumbers, nor to baser hands
Can be transferr'd: it is the only good
Man justly boasts of, or can call his own.
Riches are oft by guilt and baseness earn'd;
Or dealt by chance, to shield a lucky knave,
Or throw a cruel sun-shine on a fool.

But for one end, one much neglected use,
Are riches worth your care: (for Nature's wants
Are few, and without opulence supply'd.)
This noble end is to produce the Soul;
To shew the virtues in their fairest light;
To make Humanity the Minister
Of bounteous Providence; and teach the breast
The generous luxury the Gods enjoy.

Thus, in his graver vein, the friendly Sage
Sometimes declaim'd. Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as refin'd as ever Athens heard;
And (strange to tell!) he practis'd what he preach'd.
Skill'd in the Passions, how to check their sway
He knew, as far as reason can countroul
The lawless pow'rs. But other cares are mine:
Form'd in the school of Pæon, I relate
What Passions hurt the body, what improve:
Avoid them, or invite them, as you may.

Know then, whatever cheerful and serene
Supports the mind, supports the body too.
Hence the most vital movement mortals feel
Is hope; the balm and life-blood of the soul.
It pleases, and it lasts. Indulgent heaven
Sent down the kind delusion, through the paths
Of rugged life to lead us patient on;
And make our happiest state no tedious thing.
Our greatest good, and what we least can spare,
Is hope; the last of all our evils, fear.

But there are Passions grateful to the breast,
And yet no friends to Life: perhaps they please
Or to excess, and dissipate the soul;
Or while they please, torment. The stubborn Clown,
The ill-tam'd Ruffian, and pale Usurer,
(If Love's omnipotence such hearts can mould)
May safely mellow into love; and grow
Refin'd, humane, and generous, if they can.
Love in such bosoms never to a fault
Or pains or pleases. But, ye finer souls,
Form'd to soft luxury, and prompt to thrill
With all the tumults, all the joys and pains,
That beauty gives; with caution and reserve
Indulge the sweet destroyer of repose,
Nor court too much the Queen of charming cares.

For, while the cherish'd poison in your breast
Ferments and maddens, sick with jealousy,
Absence, distrust, or even with anxious joy,
The wholesome appetites and powers of life
Dissolve in languor. The coy stomach loaths
The genial board: your cheerful days are gone:
The generous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is fled.
To sighs devoted and to tender pains,
Pensive you sit, or solitary stray,
And waste your youth in musing. Musing first
Toy'd into care your unsuspecting heart:
It found a liking there, a sportful fire,
And that fomented into serious love;
Which musing daily strengthens and improves
Through all the heights of fondness and romance;
And you're undone, the fatal shaft has sped,
If once you doubt whether you love or no.
The body wastes away; th' infected mind,
Dissolv'd in female tenderness, forgets
Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.
Sweet heaven, from such intoxicating charms
Defend all worthy breasts! Not that I deem
Love always dangerous, always to be shunn'd.
Love well repaid, and not too weakly sunk
In wanton and unmanly tenderness,
Adds bloom to health; o'er ev'ry virtue sheds
A gay, humane, and amiable grace,
And brightens all the ornaments of man.
But fruitless, hopeless, disappointed, rack'd
With jealousy, fatigu'd with hope and fear,
Too serious, or too languishingly fond,
Unnerves the body and unmans the soul.
And some have died for love; and some run mad;
And some with desperate hand themselves have slain.

Some to extinguish, others to prevent,
A mad devotion to one dangerous fair,
Court all they meet; in hopes to dissipate
The cares of Love amongst an hundred Brides.
Th' event is doubtful: for there are who find
A cure in this; there are who find it not.
'Tis no relief; alas! it rather galls
The wound, to those who are sincerely sick.
For while from feverish and tumultuous joys
The nerves grow languid and the soul subsides,
The tender fancy smarts with every sting,

And what was love before is madness now.
Is health your care, or luxury your aim?
Be temperate still, when nature bids, obey;
Her wild, impatient sallies, bear no curb:
But when the prurient habit of delight,
Or loose imagination, spurs you on
To deeds above your strength, impute it not
To nature: Nature all compulsion hates.
Ah! let not luxury nor vain renown
Urge you to feats you well might sleep without;
To make what should be rapture a fatigue,
A tedious task: nor in the wanton arms
Of twining Lais melt your manhood down.
For from the colliquation of soft joys
How chang'd you rise! the ghost of what you were!
Languid, and melancholy, and gaunt, and wan;
Your veins exhausted, and your nerves unstrung.
Spoil'd of its balm and sprightly zest, the blood
Grows vapid phlegm; along the tender nerves
(To each slight impulse tremblingly awake)
A subtle Fiend, that mimics all the plagues,
Rapid and restless springs from part to part.
The blooming honours of your youth are fallen;
Your vigour pines; your vital powers decay;
Diseases haunt you; and untimely Age
Creeps on; unsocial, impotent and lewd.
Infatuate, impious epicure! to waste
The stores of pleasure, cheerfulness, and health!
Infatuate all who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition every hour pursue.

Who pines with Love or in lascivious flames
Consumes, is with his own consent undone:
He chuses to be wretched, to be mad;
And warn'd proceeds, and wilful, to his fate.
But there's a Passion, whose tempestuous sway
Tears up each virtue planted in the breast,
And shakes to ruins proud Philosophy.
For pale and trembling, Anger rushes in,
With falt'ring speech, and eyes that wildly stare;
Fierce as the tiger, madder than the seas,
Desperate, and arm'd with more than human strength.
How soon the calm, humane, and polish'd man
Forgets compunction, and starts up a fiend!
Who pines in Love, or wastes with silent Cares,
Envy, or ignominy, or tender grief,

Slowly descends and lingʼring to the shades.
But he whom Anger stings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and rushes apoplectic down;
Or a fierce fever hurries him to hell.
For, as the body, through unnumberʼd strings,
Reverberates each vibration of the Soul;
As is the Passion, such is still the Pain
The body feels; or chronic, or acute.
And oft a sudden storm at once oʼerpowers
The Life, or gives your Reason to the winds.
Such Fates attend the Rash alarm of Fear,
And sudden Grief, and Rage, and sudden Joy.

There are, mean time, to whom the boistʼrous fit
Is Health, and only fills the sails of life.
For where the mind a torpid winter leads,
Wrapt in a Body corpulent and cold,
And each clogg'd function lazily moves on;
A generous sally spurns thʼ incumbent load,
Unlocks the breast, and gives a cordial glow.
But if your wrathful blood is apt to boil,
Or are your nerves too irritably strung,
Wave all dispute; be cautious if you joke;
Keep Lent for ever; and forswear the Bowl.
For one rash moment sends you to the shades,
Or shatters evʼry hopeful scheme of life,
And gives to horror all your days to come.
Fate, armʼd with thunder, fire, and evʼry plague,
That ruins, tortures, or distracts mankind,
And makes the happy wretched in an hour,
Oʼerwhelms you not with woes so horrible
As your own Wrath, nor gives more sudden blows.

While Choler works, good friend, you may be wrong;
Distrust yourself, and sleep before you fight.
ʼTis not too late to-morrow to be brave;
If honour bids, to-morrow kill or die.
But calm advice against a raging fit
Avails too little; and it tries the power
Of all that ever taught in Prose or Song,
To tame the Fiend that sleeps a gentle Lamb,
And wakes a Lion. Unprovokʼd and calm,
You reason well, see as you ought to see,
And wonder at the madness of mankind:
Seizʼd with the common rage, you soon forget
The speculation of your wiser hours.

Beset with Furies of all deadly shapes,
Fierce and insidious, violent and slow:
With all that urge or lure us on to Fate:
What refuge shall we seek? what arms prepare?
Where Reason proves too weak, or void of wiles
To cope with subtle or impetuous powers,
I would invoke new Passions to your aid:
With Indignation would extinguish Fear,
With Fear or generous Pity, vanquish Rage,
And Love with Pride; and force to force oppose.

There is a charm, a power, that sways the breast;
Bids every Passion revel or be still;
Inspires with Rage, or all your Cares dissolves;
Can soothe Distraction, and almost Despair.
That power is Music: Far beyond the stretch
Of those unmeaning warblers on our stage:
Those clumsy Heroes, those fat-headed Gods,
Who move no Passion justly but Contempt;
Who, like our dancers (light indeed and strong!)
Do wond'rous fates, but never heard of grace.
The fault is ours; we bear those monstrous arts;
Good heaven! we praise them: we, with loudest peals,
Applaud the feel that highest lifts his heels;
And, with insipid shew of rapture, die
Of idiot notes impertinently long.
But he the Muse's laurel justly shares,
A Poet he, and touch'd with Heaven's own fire;
Who, with bold rage or solemn pomp of sounds,
Inflames, exalts, and ravishes the soul;
Now tender, plaintive, sweet almost to pain,
In Love dissolves you: now in sprightly strains
Breathes a gay rapture thro' your thrilling breast;
Or melts the heart with airs divinely sad;
Or wakes to horror the tremendous strings.
Such was the Bard, whose heavenly strains of old
Appeas'd the fiend of melancholy Saul.
Such was, if old and heathen fame say true,
The man who bade the Theban domes ascend,
And tam'd the savage nations with a song:
And such the Thracian, whose harmonious lyre,
Tun'd to soft woe, made all the mountains weep:
Sooth'd even th' inexorable powers of Hell,
And half redeem'd his lost Eurydice.
Music exalts each Joy, allays each Grief,

Expels Diseases, softens every Pain, 515
Subdues the Rage of Poison, and the Plague;
And hence the wise of ancient days ador'd
One Power of Physic, Melody, and Song.

THE END.



THE

MINSTREL;

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

A POEM

IN TWO BOOKS.

BY JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

Nor fear lest genuine poesy expire,
While tuneful Beattie wakes old Spenser's lyre;
His sympathetic lay his soul reveals,
And paints the perfect bard from what he feels.

H. More's Sensibility.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts,
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Burns.

PREFACE.

THE design was, to trace the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as A MINSTREL, that is, as an itenerant Poet and Musician;....a character which, according to the notions of our fore-fathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

I have endeavoured to imitate SPENSER in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety, of his composition. Antique expressions I have avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed

to suit the subject: but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can only answer, that it pleases my ear, and seems, from its Gothic structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the Poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and of language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some critics have remarked, of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only when the poetry is faulty in other respects.

The Minstrel,

A POEM.

Me vero, primum, dulces, ante omnia, Musae,
Quarum sacra fero, ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant. VIRG.

BOOK I.

I.

AH! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war;
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown!

II.

And yet, the languor of inglorious days
Not equally oppressive is to all.
Him, who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.
There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear th' obstreperous trump of Fame;
Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had HE, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

III.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
Nor need I here describe in learned lay,
How forth the MINSTREL fared in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, though homely in array;
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:
While from his bending shoulder, decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung:
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

IV.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide:
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign:
Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms.
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

V.

Though richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony, and hail the morn,
While warbling larks on russet pinions float:
Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the gay linnets carol from the hill.
O let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

VI.

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand;
Nor was perfection made for man below.
Yet all her schemes with nicest art are plann'd,
Good counteracting ill, and gladness woe.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow;
If bleak and barren Scotia's hills arise;
There plague and poison, lust and rapine grow;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And freedom fires the soul, and sparkles in the eyes.

VII.

Then grieve not, thou, to whom th' indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire;
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
Th' imperial banquet, and the rich attire.
Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refined?
No; let thy heaven-taught soul to heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony, resign'd;
Ambition's groveling crew for ever left behind.

VIII.

Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of Luxury to loll,
Stung with disease, and stupified with spleen;
Fain to implore the aid of Flattery's screen,
Even from thyself thy loathsome heart to hide,
(The mansion then no more of joy serene),
Where fear, distrust, malevolence, abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride?

IX.

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of Charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

X.

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.
But these, thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
E'er win its way to thy corrupted heart:
For, ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
The stern resolve unmov'd by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream.
Return, my roving Muse, resume thy purposed theme.

XI.

There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie *;
A nation fam'd for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

XII.

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never sway'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living water from the rock:
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, whereso'er they went.

XIII.

From labour health, from health contentment springs.
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envied not, he never thought of, kings;
Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,
That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy:
Nor Fate his calm and humble hopes beguiled;
He mourn'd no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phoebe smiled,
And her alone he loved, and loved her from a child.

IV.

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
Nor blasted were their wedded days with strife;
Each season look'd delightful, as it past,
To the fond husband, and the faithful wife.
Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd life
They never roam'd; secure beneath the storm
Which in ambition's lofty land is rife,
Where peace and love are canker'd by the worm
Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

* There is hardly an ancient ballad, or romance, wherein a Minstrel or Harper appears, but he is characterised, by way of eminence, to have been "*of the north countrie.*" It is

XV.

The wight, whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this humble pair.
His birth no oracle or seer foretold:
No prodigy appear'd in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of Edwin's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

XVI.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaude, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.
Silent, when glad; affectionate, though shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad;
And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours stared and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad:
Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad.

XVII.

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil, he ever fled;
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped;
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maize of some bewilder'd stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,
There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

XVIII.

Th' exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the wo of any living thing,
By trap, or net; by arrow or by sling;
These he detested, those he scorn'd to wield:
He wish'd to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

probable, that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces to the north of the Trent. *See Percy's Essays on the English Minstrels.*

XIX.

Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no: he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

XX.

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.
But, lo! the sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean, smile.

XXI.

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

XXII.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:
Nor less, than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling shene*
Even sad vicissiude amused his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control.

* Brightness, splendour. The word is used by some late writers, as well as by Milton.

XXIII.

" O ye wild groves, O where is now your bloom !"
(The Muse interprets thus his tender thought.)
" Your flowers, your verdure, and your balmy gloom,
" Of late so grateful in the hour of drought !
" Why do the birds, that song and rapture brought
" To all your bowers, their mansions now forsake ?
" Ah ! why has fickle chance this ruin wrought ?
" For now the storm howls mournful through the brake,
" And the dead foliage flies in many a shapeless flake.

XXIV.

" Where now the rill, melodious, pure, and cool,
" And meads, with life, and mirth, and beauty crown'd !
" Ah ! see , th' unsightly slime, and sluggish pool,
" Have all the solitary vale imbrown'd ;
" Fled each fair form, and mute each melting sound.
" The raven croaks forlorn on naked spray.
" And, hark ! the river, bursting every mound,
" Down the vale thunders ; and with wasteful sway
" Uproots the grove, and rolls the shatter'd rocks away.

XXV.

" Yet such the destiny of all on earth :
" So flourishes and fades majestic man.
" Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
" And fostering gales a-while the nursling fan.
" O smile, ye heavens, serene ; ye mildews wan,
" Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare his balmy prime,
" Nor lessen of his life the little span.
" Borne on the swift, though silent, wings of Time,
" Old age comes on apace to ravage all the clime.

XXVI.

" And be it so. Let those deplore their doom,
" Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
" But lofty souls, who look beyond the tomb,
" Can smile at Fate, and wonder how they mourn.
" Shall spring to these sad scenes no more return ?
" Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed ?
" Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
" And spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
" Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead.

XXVII.

" Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
" When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive ?
" Shall nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
" Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live ?
" Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
" With disappointment, penury, and pain ?
" No : Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive ;
" And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
" Bright thro' th' eternal year of love's triumphant reign."

XXVIII.

This truth sublime his simple sire had taught.
In sooth 't was almost all the shepherd knew.
No subtle nor superfluous lore he sought,
Nor ever wish'd his Edwin to pursue.
" Let man's own sphere (said he) confine his view,
" Be man's peculiar work his sole delight."
And much, and oft, he warn'd him to eschew
Falsehood and guile, and aye maintain the right,
By pleasure unseduced, unawed by lawless might.

XXIX.

" And, from the prayer of Want, and plaint of Wo,
" O never, never turn away thine ear !
" Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below,
" Ah ! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear !
" To others do (the law is not severe)
" What to thyself thou wishest to be done.
" Forgive thy foes ; and love thy parents dear,
" And friends, and native land ; nor those alone ;
" All human weal and wo learn thou to make thine own."

XXX.

See, in the rear of the warm sunny shower,
The visionary boy from shelter fly !
For now the storm of summer-rain is o'er,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant is the sky.
And, lo ! in the dark east, expanded high,
The rainbow brightens to the setting sun !
Fond fool, that deem'st the streaming glory nigh,
How vain the chace thine ardor has begun !
'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purposed race be run.

XXXI.

Yet couldst thou learn, that thus it fares with age,
When pleasure, wealth, or power the bosom warm,
This baffled hope might tame thy manhood's rage,
And Disappointment of her sting disarm.
But why should foresight thy fond heart alarm?
Perish the lore that deadens young desire!
Pursue, poor imp, th' imaginary charm,
Indulge gay Hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire:
Fancy and Hope too soon shall of themselves expire.

XXXII.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening wander'd down the vale.
There would he dream of graves, and corses pale;
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain and wail,
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

XXXIII.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where Fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first, a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of night.

XXXIV.

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long robed minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

XXXV.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-colour'd rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

XXXVI.

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scard'st the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer! who oft hast reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!
O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let harmony aye shut her gentle ear:
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

XXXVII.

Forbear my Muse. Let Love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every change amusement flow?
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are born.

XXXVIII.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

XXXIX.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crown'd with her pail the trippling milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tour.

XL.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme;
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody.

XLI.

Hence! ye, who snare and stupefy the mind,
Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!
Greedy and fell, though impotent and blind,
Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair fane,
And ever ply your venom'd fangs amain!
Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling slime
First gave you form! hence! lest the Muse should deign,
(Though loath on theme so mean to waste a rhyme),
With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious crime.

XLII.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
Amus'd my childhood, and inform'd my youth.
O let your spirit still my bosom sooth,
Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings guide:
Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth;
For well I know, where-ever ye reside,
There harmony, and peace, and innocence abide.

XLIII.

Ah me! neglected on the lonesome plain,
As yet poor Edwin never knew your lore,
Save when against the winter's drenching rain,
And driving snow, the cottage shut the door,
Then, as instructed by tradition hoar,
Her legend when the Beldame 'gan impart,
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart;
Much he the tale admired, but more the tuneful art.

XLIV.

Various and strange was the long-winded tale;
And halls, and knights, and feats of arms, display'd;
Or merry swains, who quaff the nut-brown ale,
And sing, enamour'd of the nut-brown maid;
The moon-light revel of the fairy glade;
Or hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves th' unutterable trade*,
'Midst fiends and spectres, quench the moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride th' infuriate flood.

XLV.

But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the Beldame would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan-babes, and guardian uncle fierce.
O cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart by lust of lucre sear'd to stone?
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those hopeless orphan-babes by thy fell arts undone.

XLVI.

Behold, with berries smear'd, with brambles torn†,
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die.
Amidst the howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry:
"For from the town, the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance darest defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When Death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

* Allusion to *Shakespeare.*

Macbeth. How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags,
What is't you do?

Witches. A deed *without a name. Macbeth, Act IV, Scene I.*

† See the fine old ballad, called, *The Children in the Wood.*

XLVII.

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear,
" But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
" And Innocence thus die by doom severe ?"
O Edwin ! while thy heart is yet sincere,
Th' assaults of discontent and doubt repel :
Dark even at noontide is our mortal sphere ;
But let us hope ; to doubt is to rebel ;
Let us exult in hope, that all shall yet be well.

XLVIII.

Nor be thy generous indignation check'd,
Nor check'd the tender tear to Misery given ;
From Guilt's contagious power shall that protect,
This soften and refine the soul for Heaven.
But dreadful is their doom, whom doubt has driven
To censure Fate, and pious Hope forego :
Like yonder blasted boughs by lightning riven,
Perfection, beauty, life, they never know,
But frown on all that pass, a monument of wo.

XLIX.

Shall he, whose birth, maturity, and age,
Scarce fill the circle of one summer day,
Shall the poor gnat with discontent and rage
Exclaim, that Nature hastens to decay,
If but a cloud obstruct the solar ray,
If but a momentary shower descend !
Or shall frail man Heaven's dread decree gainsay,
Which bade the series of events extend
Wide through unnumber'd worlds and ages without end ?

L.

One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Through the dark medium of life' feverish dream ;
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem ;
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
O then renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies ;
For thou art but of dust ; be humble, and be wise,

LI.

Thus Heaven enlarged his soul in riper years.
For Nature gave him strength and fire, to soar
On Fancy's wing above this vale of tears;
Where dark cold-hearted sceptics, creeping, pore
Through microscope of metaphysic lore:
And much they grope for truth, but never hit.
For why? their powers, inadequate before,
This idle art makes more and more unfit;
Yet deem they darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

LII.

Nor was this ancient dame a foe to mirth.
Her ballad, jest, and riddle's quaint device
Oft cheer'd the shepherds round their social hearth;
Whom levity or spleen could ne'er entice
To purchase chat or laughter, at the price
Of decency. Nor let it faith exceed,
That Nature forms a rustic taste so nice.
Ah! had they been of court or city breed,
Such delicacy were right marvellous indeed.

LIII.

Oft when the winter-storm had ceased to rave,
He roam'd the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where 'midst the changeful scenery ever new
Fancy a thousand wond'rous forms descries
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

LIV.

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthusiast oft would take his way,
Listening with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array
When sulphurous clouds roll'd on th' autumnal day.
Even then he hasten'd from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er Heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

LV.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe when all
In sprightly dance the village-youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall.
From the rude gambol far remote reclined,
Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind.
Ah then, all jollity seem'd noise and folly.
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refined,
Ah what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compared of heavenly melancholy.

LVI.

Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas! how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there, who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He needs not woo the Muse; he is her scorn.
The sophist's robe of cobweb he shall twine;
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page; or mourn,
And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine;
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.

LVII.

For Edwin fate a nobler doom had plann'd;
Song was his favourite and first pursuit.
The wild harp rang to his adventurous hand,
And languish'd to his breath the plaintive flute.
His infant muse, though artless, was not mute:
Of elegance as yet he took no care;
For this of time and culture is the fruit;
And Edwin gain'd at last this fruit so rare:
As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

LVIII.

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime, or dreadful, in earth, sea or sky,
By chance, or search, was offer'd to his view,
He scan'd with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From Gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Roused him, still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, though long by penury control'd,
And solitude, his soul her graces 'gan unfold.

LIX.

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the season bland,
And in their northern cave the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl'd; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crown'd;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow*.

LX.

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while.
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But on this verse if MONTAGU should smile,
New strains erelong shall animate thy frame.
And her applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

* Spring and Autumn are hardly known to the Laplanders. About the time the sun enters Cancer, their fields, which a week before were covered with snow, appear on a sudden full of grass and flowers. *Scheffer's History of Lapland*, p. 16.

BOOK II.

I.

OF chance or change O let not man complain,
Else shall he never, never cease to wail;
For, from the imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of fortune's fickle gale;
Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doom'd;
Earthquakes have raised to heaven the humble vale,
And gulphs the mountain's mighty mass entomb'd,
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloom'd*.

II.

But sure to foreign climes we need not range,
Nor search the ancient records of our race,
To learn the dire effects of time and change,
Which in ourselves, alas, we daily trace.
Yet at the darken'd eye, the wither'd face,
Or hoary hair, I never will repine:
But spare, O Time, whate'er of mental grace,
Of condour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame is mine.

III.

So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
And smite the Gothic lyre with harsher hand;
Now when I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song.

* See *Plato's* Timeus.

IV.

" Perish the lore that deadens young desire"
Is the soft tenor of my song no more.
Edwin, though loved of heaven, must not aspire
To bliss, which mortals never knew before.
On trembling wings let youthful fancy soar,
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy:
But now and then the shades of life explore;
Though many a sound and sight of wo annoy,
And many a qualm of care his rising hopes destroy.

V.

Vigour from toil, from trouble patience grows.
The weakly blossom, warm in summer bower,
Some tints of transient beauty may disclose;
But soon it withers in the chilling hour.
Mark yonder oaks! Superior to the power
Of all the warring winds of heaven they rise,
And from the stormy promontory tower,
And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies.

VI.

And now the downy cheek and deepen'd voice
Gave dignity to Edwin's blooming prime;
And walks of wider circuit were his choice,
And vales more mild, and mountains more sublime.
One evening, as he framed the careless rhyme,
It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which heretofore his foot had never trode;
A vale appear'd below, a deep retired abode.

VII.

Thither he hied, enamour'd of the scene.
For rocks on rocks piled, as by magic spell,
Here scorch'd with lightning, there with ivy green,
Fenced from the north and east this savage dell.
Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long, long groves eternal murmur made:
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell,
Where, through the cliffs, the eye, remote, survey'd
Blue hills, and glittering waves, and skies in gold array'd.

VIII.

Along this narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,
And, here and there, a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crown'd.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of that craggy mound
The perching eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings to shoot athwart the sky.

IX.

One cultivated spot there was, that spread
Its flowry bosom to the noonday beam,
Where many a rose-bud rears its blushing head,
And herbs for food with future plenty teem.
Sooth'd by the lulling sound of grove and stream,
Romantic visions swarm on Edwin's soul:
He minded not the sun's last trembling gleam,
Nor heard from far the twilight curfew toll;
When slowly on his ear these moving accents stole.

X.

"Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
"And woo the weary to profound repose;
"Can passion's wildest uproar lay to rest,
"And whisper comfort to the man of woes!
"Here innocence may wander, safe from foes,
"And contemplation soar on seraph wings.
"O Solitude, the man who thee foregoes,
"When lucre lures him, or ambition stings,
"Shall never know the source whence real grandeur springs.

XI.

"Vain man, is grandeur given to gay attire?
"Then let the butterfly thy pride upbraid:
"To friends, attendants, armies, bought with hire?
"It is thy weakness that requires their aid:
"To palaces, with gold and gems inlay'd?
"They fear the thief, and tremble in the storm:
"To hosts, through carnage who to conquest wade?
"Behold the victor vanquish'd by the worm!
"Behold, what deeds of wo the locust can perform!

XII.

" True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind
" Virtue has raised above the things below ;
" Who, every hope and fear to Heaven resign'd,
" Shrinks not, though Fortune aim her deadliest blow."
This strain from 'midst the rocks was heard to flow,
In solemn sounds. Now beam'd the evening star ;
And from embattled clouds emerging slow
Cynthia came riding on her silver car ;
And hoary mountain-cliffs shone faintly from afar.

XIII.

Soon did the solemn voice its theme renew ;
(While Edwin wrapt in wonder listening stood)
" Ye tools and toys of tyranny, adieu,
" Scorn'd by the wise, and hated by the good !
" Ye only can engage the servile brood
" Of Levity and Lust, who all their days,
" Asham'd of truth and liberty, have woo'd,
" And hug'd the chain, that glittering on their gaze
" Seems to outshine the pomp of heaven's empyreal blaze.

XIV.

" Like them, abandon'd to Ambition's sway,
" I sought for glory in the paths of guile ;
" And fawn'd and smiled, to plunder and betray,
" Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while ;
" So gnaw'd the viper the corroding file.
" But now with pangs of keen remorse I rue
" Those years of trouble and debasement vile.
" Yet why should I this cruel theme pursue ?
" Fly, fly, detested thoughts, for ever from my view.

XV.

" The gusts of appetite, the clouds of care,
" And storms of disappointment, all o'erpast,
" Henceforth, no earthly hope with heaven shall share
" This heart, where peace serenely shines at last.
" And if for me no treasure be amass'd,
" And if no future age shall hear my name,
" I lurk the more secure from fortune's blast,
" And with more leisure feed this pious flame,
" Whose rapture far transcends the fairest hope of fame.

XVI.

" The end and the reward of toil is rest.
" Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.
" Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possess'd,
" Who ever felt his weight of wo decrease!
" Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
" The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string
" The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
" All that art, fortune, enterprise, can bring,
" If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride the bosom wring!

XVII.

" Let Vanity adorn the marble tomb
" With trophies, rhymes, and 'scutcheons of renown,
" In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
" Where night and desolation ever frown.
" Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down;
" Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
" With here and there a violet bestrown,
" Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
" And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

XVIII.

" And thither let the village swain repair;
" And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
" To deck with flowers her half-dishevel'd hair,
" And celebrate the merry morn of May.
" There let the shepherd's pipe the live-long day
" Fill all the grove with love's bewitching wo;
" And when mild Evening comes in mantle grey,
" Let not the blooming band make haste to go;
" No ghost nor spell my long and last abode shall know.

XIX.

" For though I fly to 'scape from Fortune's rage,
" And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,
" Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
" Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn;
" For virtue lost, and ruin'd man, I mourn.
" O Man, creation's pride, heaven's darling child,
" Whom nature's best divinest gifts adorn,
" Why from thy home are truth and joy exiled,
" And all thy favourite haunts with blood and tears defiled!

XX.

" Along yon glittering sky what glory streams!
" What majesty attends Night's lovely queen!
" Fair laugh our vallies in the vernal beams;
" And mountains rise, and oceans roll between,
" And all conspire to beautify the scene.
" But, in the mental world, what chaos drear!
" What forms of mournful, loathsome, furious mien!
" O when shall that Eternal Morn appear,
" These dreadful forms to chase, this chaos dark to clear!

XXI.

" O Thou, at whose creative smile, yon heaven,
" In all the pomp of beauty, life and light,
" Rose from th' abyss; when dark Confusion, driven
" Down, down the bottomless profound of night,
" Fled, where he ever flies thy piercing sight!
" O glance on these sad shades one pitying ray,
" To blast the fury of oppressive might,
" Melt the hard heart to love and mercy's sway,
" And cheer the wandering soul, and light him on the way."

XXII.

Silence ensued: and Edwin raised his eyes
In tears, for grief lay heavy at his heart.
" And is it thus in courtly life (he cries)
" That man to man acts a betrayer's part?
" And dares he thus the gifts of heaven pervert,
" Each social instinct, and sublime desire?
" Hail poverty! if honour, wealth, and art,
" If what the great pursue, and learn'd admire,
" Thus dissipate and quench the soul's ethereal fire!

XXIII.

He said, and turn'd away; nor did the Sage
O'erhear, in silent orison's employ'd.
The Youth, his rising sorrow to assuage,
Home as he hied, the evening scene enjoy'd:
For now no cloud obscures the starry void;
The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills *;
Nor is the mind with startling sounds annoy'd;
A soothing murmur the lone region fills,
Of groves, and dying gales, and melancholy rills.

* How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.
Shakspeare.

XXIV.

But he from day to day more anxious grew.
The voice still seem'd to vibrate on his ear.
Nor durst he hope the Hermit's tale untrue ;
For man he seem'd to love, and heaven to fear ;
And none speaks false, where there is none to hear.
" Yet, can man's gentle heart become so fell !
" No more in vain conjecture let me wear
" My hours away, but seek the Hermit's cell ;
" 'Tis he my doubt can clear, perhaps my care dispel."

XXV.

At early dawn the Youth his journey took,
And many a mountain pass'd, and valley wide,
Then reach'd the wild ; where, in a flowery Nook,
And seated on a mossy stone, he spied
An ancient man : his harp lay him beside.
A stag sprang from the pasture at his call,
And, kneeling, lick'd the wither'd hand that tied
A wreathe of woodbine round his antlers tall,
And hung his lofty neck with many a flowret small.

XXVI.

And now the hoary Sage arose, and saw
The wanderer approaching : innocence
Smiled on his glowing cheek, but modest awe
Depress'd his eye, that fear'd to give offence.
" Who art thou, courteous stranger ? and from whence ?
" Why roam thy steps to this sequester'd dale ?"
" A shepherd-boy (the Youth replied) far hence
" My habitation ; hear my artless tale ;
" Nor levity nor falsehood shall thine ear assail.

XXVII.

" Late as I roam'd, intent on Nature's charms,
" I reach'd at eve this wilderness profound ;
" And, leaning where yon oak expands her arms,
" Heard these rude cliffs thine awful voice rebound,
" (For in thy speech I recognize the sound.)
" You mourn'd for ruin'd man, and virtue lost,
" And seem'd to feel of keen remorse the wound,
" Pondering on former days by guilt engross'd,
" Or in the giddy storm of dissipation toss'd.

XXVIII.

" But say, in courtly life can craft be learn'd,
" Where knowledge opens, and exalts the soul?
" Where Fortune lavishes her gifts unearn'd,
" Can selfishness the liberal heart controul ?
" Is glory there achiev'd by arts as foul
" As those that felons, fiends, and furies plan ?
" Spiders ensnare, snakes poison, tygers prowl;
" Love is the Godlike attribute of man.
" O teach a simple youth this mystery to scan.

XXIX.

" Or else the lamentable strain disclaim,
" And give me back the calm contented mind;
" Which, late, exulting, view'd in Nature's frame,
" Goodness untainted, wisdom unconfined,
" Grace, grandeur, and utility combined.
" Restore those tranquil days, that saw me still
" Well pleas'd with all, but most with human kind;
" When fancy roam'd through Nature's works at will.
" Uncheck'd by cold distrust, and uninform'd of ill."

XXX.

" Wouldst thou (the sage replied) in peace return
" To the gay dreams of fond romantic youth,
" Leave me to hide in this remote sojourn,
" From every gentle ear the dreadful truth :
" For if my desultory strain with ruth
" And indignation make thine eye o'erflow,
" Alas ! what comfort could thy anguish sooth,
" Shouldst thou th' extent of human folly know.
" Be ignorance thy choice, where knowledge leads to wo.

XXXI.

" But let untender thoughts afar be driven ;
" Nor venture to arraign the dread decree.
" For know, to man, as candidate for heaven,
" The voice of The Eternal said, Be free :
" And this divine prerogative to thee
" Does virtue, happiness, and heaven convey :
" For virtue is the child of liberty,
" And happiness of virtue ; nor can they
" Be free to keep the path, who are not free to stray.

XXXII.

" Yet leave me not. I would allay that grief,
" Which else might thy young virtue overpower
" And in thy converse I shall find relief,
" When the dark shades of melancholy lower;
" For solitude has many a dreary hour,
" Even when exempt from grief, remorse, and pain:
" Come often then; for, haply, in my bower,
" Amusement, knowledge, wisdom thou may'st gain:
" If I one soul improve, I have not lived in vain."

XXXIII.

And now, at length, to Edwin's ardent gaze
The Muse of history unrolls her page;
But few, alas! the scenes her art displays,
To charm his fancy, or his heart engage.
Here Chiefs their thirst of power in blood assuage,
And straight their flames with ten-fold fierceness burn:
Here smiling Virtue prompts the patriot's rage,
But lo, erelong, is left alone to mourn,
And languish in the dust, and clasp th' abandon'd urn.

XXXIV.

" Ambition's slippery verge shall mortals tread,
" Where ruin's gulph unfathom'd yawns beneath!
" Shall life, shall liberty be lost, (he said)
" For the vain toys that Pomp and Power bequeath!
" The car of victory, the plume, the wreathe,
" Defend not from the bolt of fate the brave;
" No note the clarion of Renown can breathe,
" T' alarm the long night of the lonely grave,
" Or check the headlong haste of Time's o'erwhelming wave.

XXXV.

" Ah, what avails it to have traced the springs,
" That whirl of empire the stupendous wheel!
" Ah, what have I to do with conquering kings,
" Hands drench'd in blood, and breasts begirt with steel!
" To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel,
" Heroes, alas! are things of small concern;
" Could History man's secret heart reveal,
" And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
" Her transcripts to explore what bosom would not yearn!

XXXVI.

" This praise, O Cheronean Sage*, is thine.
" (Why should this praise to thee alone belong?)
" All else from Nature's moral path decline,
" Lured by the toys that captivate the throng;
" To herd in cabinets and camps, among
" Spoil, carnage, and the cruel pomp of pride;
" Or chaunt of heraldry the drowsy song,
" How tyrant blood, o'er many a region wide,
" Rolls to a thousand thrones its execrable tide.

XXXVII.

" O who of man the story will unfold,
" Ere victory and empire wrought annoy,
" In that elysian age (misnamed of gold)
" The age of love, and innocence, and joy,
" When all were great and free! man's sole employ
" To deck the bosom of his parent earth;
" Or toward his bower the murmuring stream decoy,
" To aid the flowret's long-expected birth,
" And lull the bed of peace, and crown the board of mirth.

XXXVIII.

" Sweet were your shades, O ye primeval groves,
" Whose boughs to man his food and shelter lent,
" Pure in his pleasures, happy in his loves,
" His eye still smiling, and his heart content.
" Then, hand in hand, Health, Sport, and Labour went.
" Nature supply'd the wish she taught to crave.
" None prowl'd for prey, none watch'd to circumvent.
" To all an equal lot heaven's bounty gave:
" No vassal fear'd his lord, no tyrant fear'd his slave.

XXXIX.

" But ah! th' Historic Muse has never dared
" To pierce those hallow'd bowers: 'tis Fancy's beam
" Pour'd on the vision of th' enraptured Bard,
" That paints the charms of that delicious theme.
" Then hail sweet Fancy's ray! and hail the dream
" That weans the weary soul from guilt and wo!
" Careless what others of my choice may deem,
" I long where Love and Fancy lead to go,
" And meditate on heaven; enough of earth I know."

* Plutarch.

XL.

" I cannot blame thy choice (the Sage replied)
" For soft and smooth are Fancy's flowery ways.
" And yet, even there, if left without a guide,
" The young adventurer unsafely plays.
" Eyes dazzled long by Fiction's gaudy rays
" In modest Truth nor light nor beauty find.
" And who, my child, would trust the meteor blaze,
" That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
" More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shined?

XLI.

" Fancy enervates, while it sooths, the heart,
" And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight:
" To joy each heightening charm it can impart,
" But wraps the hour of wo in tenfold night.
" And often, where no real ills affright,
" Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
" Assail with equal or superior might,
" And through the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
" And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal pain.

XLII.

" And yet, alas! the real ills of life
" Claim the full vigour of a mind prepared,
" Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife,
" It's guide Experience, and Truth its guard.
" We fare on earth as other men have fared.
" Were they successful? Let not us despair.
" Was disppointment oft their sole reward?
" Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare,
" How they have borne the load ourselves are doom'd to bear.

XLIII.

" What charms th' Historic Muse adorn, from spoils,
" And blood, and tyrants, when she wings her flight,
" To hail the patriot Prince, whose pious toils
" Sacred to science, liberty, and right,
" And peace, through every age divinely bright
" Shall shine the boast and wonder of mankind!
" Sees yonder sun, from his meridian height,
" A lovelier scene than Virtue thus enshrined
" In power, and man with man for mutual aid combined?

XLIV.

" Hail sacred Polity, by Freedom rear'd!
" Hail sacred Freedom, when by Law restrain'd!
" Without you what were man? A grovelling herd
" In darkness, wretchedness, and want enchain'd.
" Sublim'd by you, the Greek and Roman reign'd
" In arts unrivall'd: O, to latest days,
" In Albion may your influence unprofaned
" To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
" And prompt the Sage's lore, and fire the Poet's lays!

XLV.

" But now let other themes our care engage.
" For lo, with modest yet majestic grace,
" To curb Imagination's lawless rage,
" And from within the cherish'd heart to brace,
" Philosophy appears. The gloomy race
" By Indolence and moping Fancy bred,
" Fear, Discontent, Solicitude give place,
" And Hope and Courage brighten in their stead,
" While on the kindling soul her vital beams are shed.

XLVI.

" Then waken from long lethargy to life*
" The seeds of happiness, and powers of thought;
" Then jarring appetites forego their strife,
" A strife by ignorance to madness wrought.
" Pleasure by savage man is dearly bought
" With fell revenge, lust that defies controul
" With gluttony and death. The mind untaught
" Is a dark waste, where fiends and tempests howl;
" As Phœbus to the world, is Science to the soul.

XLVII.

" And Reason now through Number, Time, and Space,
" Darts the keen lustre of her serious eye,
" And learns, from facts compared, the laws to trace,
" Whose long progression leads to Deity.
" Can mortal strength presume to soar so high!
" Can mortal sight, so oft bedim'd with tears,
" Such glory bear!....for lo, the shadows fly
" From nature's face; Confusion disappears,
" And order charms the eyes, and harmony the ears.

* The influence of the Philosophic Spirit, in humanizing the mind, and preparing it for intellectual exertion and delicate pleasure;....in exploring, by the help of geometry, the

XLVIII.

" In the deep windings of the grove, no more
" The hag obscene, and grisly phantom dwell;
" Nor in the fall of mountain-stream, or roar
" Of winds, is heard the angry spirit's yell;
" No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
" Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon;
" Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,
" To ease of fancied pangs the labouring moon,
" Or chace the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon.

XLIX.

" Many a long-lingering year, in lonely isle,
" Stun'd with th' eternal turbulence of waves,
" Lo, with dim eyes, that never learn'd to smile,
" And trembling hands, the famish'd native craves
" Of Heaven his wretched fare: shivering in caves,
" Or scorch'd on rocks, he pines from day to day;
" But Science gives the word; and lo, he braves
" The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
" And to a happier land wafts merrily away.

L.

" And even where Nature loads the teeming plain
" With the full pomp of vegetable store,
" Her bounty, unimproved, is deadly bane:
" Dark woods and rankling wilds, from shore to shore,
" Stretch their enormous gloom; which to explore
" Even Fancy trembles, in her sprightliest mood;
" For there each eyeball gleams with lust of gore,
" Nestles each murderous and each monstrous brood,
" Plague lurks in every shade, and steams from every flood.

LI.

" 'Twas from Philosophy man learn'd to tame
" The soil by plenty to intemperance fed.
" Lo, from the echoing ax, and thundering flame,
" Poison and plague and yelling rage are fled.
" The waters, bursting from their slimy bed,
" Bring health and melody to every vale:
" And, from the breezy main, and mountain's head,
" Ceres and Flora, to the sunny dale,
" To fan their glowing charms, invite the fluttering gale.

system of the universe;....in banishing superstition;....in promoting navigation, agriculture, medicine, and moral and political science:....from Stanza XLVI. to Stanza LVI.

LII.

" What dire necessities on every hand
" Our art, our strength, our fortitude require !
" Of foes intestine what a numerous band
" Against this little throb of life conspire !
" Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
" A while, and turn aside Death's level'd dart,
" Sooth the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
" And brace the nerves once more, and cheer the heart,
" And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

LIII.

" Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
" Science exerts her all-composing sway.
" Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
" Or pines to Indolence and Spleen a prey,
" Or Avarice, a fiend more fierce than they ?
" Flee to the shade of Academus' grove ;
" Where cares molest not, discord melts away
" In harmony, and the pure passions prove
" How sweet the words of truth breathed from the lips of Love.

LIV.

" What cannot Art and Industry perform,
" When Science plans the progress of their toil !
" They smile at penury, disease, and storm ;
" And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
" When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
" A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
" Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
" Deep-versed in man the philosophic Sage
" Prepares with lenient hand their phrenzy to assuage.

LV.

" 'Tis he alone, whose comprehensive mind,
" From situation, temper, soil, and clime
" Explored, a nation's various powers can bind
" And various orders, in one Form sublime
" Of policy, that, midst the wrecks of time,
" Secure shall lift its head on high, nor fear
" Th' assault of foreign or domestic crime,
" While public faith, and public love sincere,
" And Industry and Law maintain their sway severe."

LVI.

Enraptured by the Hermit's strain, the Youth
Proceeds the path of Science to explore.
And now, expanding to the beams of Truth,
New energies, and charms unknown before,
His mind discloses: Fancy now no more
Wantons on fickle pinion through the skies;
But fix'd in aim, and conscious of her power,
Aloft from cause to cause exults to rise,
Creation's blended stores arranging as she flies.

LVII.

Nor love of Novelty alone inspires,
Their laws and nice dependencies to scan:
For, mindful of the aids that life requires,
And of the services man owes to man,
He meditates new arts on Nature's plan;
The cold desponding breath of Sloth to warm,
The flame of Industry and Genius fan,
And Emulation's noble rage alarm,
And the long hours of Toil and Solitude to charm.

LVIII.

But she, who set on fire his infant heart,
And all his dreams and all his wanderings shared
And bless'd, the Muse, and her celestial art,
Still claim th' Enthusiast's fond and first regard.
From Nature's beauties variously compared
And variously combined, he learns to frame
Those forms of bright perfection*, which the Bard,
While boundless hope and boundless views inflame,
Enamour'd consecrates to never-dying fame.

LIX.

Of late, with cumbersome, though pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where Ornament the second place
Holds to intrinsic worth and just design
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage: he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase, and lops th' unwieldly line.

* General ideas of excellence, the immediate archetypes of sublime imitation, both in painting and in poetry. *See Aristotle's Poetics, and the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

LX.

Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,
When the great Shepherd of the Mantuan plains*
His deep majestic melody 'gan roll:
Fain would I sing, what transport storm'd his soul,
How the red current throb'd his veins along,
When like Pelides, bold beyond controul,
Without art graceful, without effort strong,
Homer raised high to heaven the loud, th' impetuous song.

LXI.

And how his lyre, though rude her first essays,
Now skill'd to sooth, to triumph, to complain,
Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
I fain would sing—but ah! I strive in vain.
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound,
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And, mix'd with shrieks of woe, the knells of death resound.

LXII.

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!
He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each virtue fired, each glance refined,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!†
He sleeps in dust. Ah, how should I presume
My theme! To heart-consuming grief resign'd
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears. Ye flowery lays adieu!

LXIII.

Art thou, my GREGORY, forever fled?
And am I left to unavailing wo?
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow,
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go?
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers;
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish, and allay my fears.
'Tis meet that I should mourn: flow forth afresh my tears.

* Virgil.

† This excellent person died suddenly, on the 10th of February, 1773. The conclusion of this poem was written a few days after.

The Hermit.

(BY THE AUTHOR OF THE MINSTREL.)

AT the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove:
'Twas thus, by the cave of a mountain afar,
While his harp rung symphonious, a Hermit began;
No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a Sage, though he felt as a man.

"Ah why, all abandon'd to darkness and wo,
"Why, lone Philomela, that languishing fall?
"For Spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
"And Sorrow no longer thy bosom inthral.
"But, if pity inspire thee, renew the sad lay,
"Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee mourn;
"O soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass away:
"Full quickly they pass—but they never return,

"Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
"The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent displays:
"But lately I mark'd, when majestic on high
"She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze.
"Roll on thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
"The path that conducts thee to splendor again.
"But Man's faded glory what change shall renew!
"Ah fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

" 'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more ;
" I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you ;
" For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
" Prefumed with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew.
" Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn ;
" Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.
" But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn!
" O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!"

' 'Twas thus, by the glare of false Science betray'd,
' That leads to bewilder ; and dazzles, to blind ;
' My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
' Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.
" O pity, great Father of light," then I cry'd,
" Thy creature who fain would not wander from Thee!
" Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride :
" From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free."

' And darkness and doubt are now flying away.
' No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.
' So breaks on the traveller, faint and astray,
' The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
' See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
' And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom !
' On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
' And Beauty Immortal awakes from the tomb.'

THE END.

THE

PLEASURES

OF

IMAGINATION;

A POEM

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY Dr. AKENSIDE.

And *that sweet* bard, who to our fancy brings
" The gayest, happiest attitudes of things,"
His *raptur'd verse* can throw neglected by,
And to Lucretius lift a reverend eye.

Murphy's Poet. Epist. to Dr. Johnson.

THE

DESIGN.

THERE are certain powers in human nature which seem to hold a middle place between the organs of bodily sense and the faculties of moral perception.——They have been called by a very general name, *The Powers of Imagination.* Like the external senses they relate to matter and motion; and at the same time, give the mind ideas analogous to those of moral approbation and dislike. As they are the inlets of some of the most exquisite pleasures we are acquainted with, men of warm and sensible tempers have sought means to recall the delightful perceptions they afford, independent of the objects which originally produced them. This gave rise to the imitative or designing arts; some of which, like painting and sculpture, directly copy the external appearances which were admired in nature; others, like music and poetry, bring them back to remembrance by signs universally established and understood.

But these arts, as they grew more correct and deliberate, were naturally led to extend their imitation beyond the peculiar objects of the imaginative powers; especially poetry, which making use of language as the instrument by which it imi-

tates, is consequently become an unlimited representative of every species and mode of being. Yet as their primary intention was only to express the objects of imagination, and as they still abound chiefly in ideas of that class, they of course retain their original character, and all the different pleasures they excite, are termed, in general, *Pleasures of Imagination.*

The design of the following poem is to give a view of these, in the largest acceptation of the term; *so that whatever our imagination feels from the agreeable appearances of nature, and all the various entertainment we meet with either in poetry, painting, music, or any of the elegant arts, might be deducible from one or other of those principles in the constitution of the human mind which are here established and explained.*

In executing this general plan, it was necessary first of all to distinguish the imagination from our other faculties; and then to characterise those original forms or properties of being about which it is conversant, and which are by nature adapted to it, as light is to the eyes, or truth to the understanding. These properties Mr. Addison had reduced to the three general classes of greatness, novelty, and beauty; and into these we may analyse every object, however complex, which, properly speaking, is delightful to the imagination. But such an object may also include many other sources of pleasure; and its beauty, or novelty, or grandeur, will make a stronger impression by reason of this concurrence. Besides this, the imitative arts, especially poetry, owe much of their effect to a similar exhibition of properties quite foreign to the imagination; insomuch that in every line of the most applauded poems, we meet with either ideas drawn from the external senses,

or truths discovered to the understanding, or illustrations of contrivance and final causes, or, above all the rest, with circumstances proper to awaken and engage the passions. It was therefore necessary to enumerate and exemplify these different species of pleasure; especially that from the passions, which, as it is supreme in the noblest works of human genius, so, being in some particulars not a little surprising, gave an opportunity to enliven the didactic turn of the poem, by introducing a piece of machinery to account for the appearance.

After these parts of the subject which hold chiefly of admiration, or naturally warm and interest the mind, a pleasure of a very different nature, that from ridicule, came next to be considered. As this is the foundation of the comic manner in all the arts, and has been but very imperfectly treated by moral writers, it was thought proper to give it a particular illustration, and to distinguish the general sources from which the ridicule of characters is derived. Here too a change of stile became necessary; such a one as might yet be consistent, if possible, with the general taste of composition in the serious parts of the subject; nor is it an easy task to give any tolerable force to images of this kind, without running either into the gigantic expressions of the mock heroic, or the familiar and pointed raillery of professed satire; neither of which would have been proper here.

The materials of all imitation being thus laid open, nothing now remained but to illustrate some particular pleasures which arise either from the relations of different objects one to another, or from the nature of imitation itself. Of the first kind is that various and complicated resemblance existing between several parts of the material, and

immaterial worlds, which is the foundation of metaphor and wit. As it seems in a great measure to depend on the early associations of our ideas, and as this habit of associating is the source of many pleasures and pains in life, and on that account bears a great share in the influence of poetry and the other arts, it is therefore mentioned here, and its effects described. Then follows a general account of the production of these elegant arts, and the secondary pleasure, as it is called, arising from the resemblance of their imitations to the original appearances of nature. After which the design is closed with some reflections on the general conduct of the powers of imagination, and on their natural and moral usefulness in life.

Concerning the manner or turn of composition which prevails in this piece, little can be said with propriety by the author. He had two models; that ancient and simple one of the first Grecian poets as it is refined by Virgil in the Georgics; and the familiar epistolary way of Horace. This latter has several advantages. It admits of a greater variety of stile; it more readily engages the generality of readers, as partaking more of the air of conversation; and, especially with the assistance of rhyme, leads to a closer and more concise expression. Add to this the example of the most perfect of modern poets, who has so happily applied this manner to the noblest parts of philosophy, that the public taste is in a great measure formed to it alone. Yet after all, the subject before us, tending almost constantly to admiration and enthusiasm, seemed rather to demand a more open, pathetic, and figured stile. This too appeared more natural, as the author's aim was, not so much to give formal precepts, or enter into the way of direct argumentation, as, by exhibiting the most engaging prospects of nature, to enlarge

and harmonize the imagination, and by that means insensibly dispose the minds of men to the same dignity of taste in religion, morals, and civil life. It is on this account that he is so careful to point out the benevolent intention of the author of nature in every principle of the human constitution here insisted on, and also to unite the moral excellencies of life in the same point of view with the mere external objects of good taste; thus recommending them in common to our natural propensity for admiring what is beautiful and lovely. The same views have also led him to introduce some sentiments which may perhaps be looked upon as not quite direct to the subject; but, since they bear an obvious relation to it, the authority of Virgil, the faultless model of didactic poetry, will best support him in this particular. For the sentiments themselves he makes no apology.

ARGUMENT.

THE *subject proposed. Difficulty of treating it poetically. The ideas of the divine mind, the origin of every quality pleasing to the imagination. The natural variety of consitution in the minds of men, with its final cause. The idea of a fine imagination, and the state of the mind in the enjoyment of those pleasures which it affords. All the primary pleasures of imagination result from the perception of greatness, or wonderfulness, or beauty in objects. The pleasure from greatness, with its final cause. Pleasure from novelty or wonderfulness, with its final cause. Pleasure from beauty, with its final cause. The connection of beauty with truth and good, applied to the conduct of life. Invitation to the study of moral philosophy. The different degrees of beauty in different species of objects—Colour, shape, natural concretes, vegetables, animals, the mind, the sublime, the fair, the wonderful of the mind. The connection of the imagination and moral faculty. Conclusion.*

THE

Pleasures of Imagination.

A POEM.

BOOK I.

WITH what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men; and what the pleasing stores
Which beauteous imitation thence derives
To deck the poet's, or the painter's toil;
My verse unfolds. Attend, ye gentle powers
Of musical delight! and while I sing
Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.
Thou, smiling queen of every tuneful breast,
Indulgent FANCY! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flowers and dews to sprinkle on the turf
Where SHAKESPEARE lies, be present; and with thee
Let Fiction come, upon her vagrant wings
Wafting ten thousand colours through the air,
Which by the glances of her magic eye,
She blends and shifts at will, through countless forms
Her wild creation Goddess of the lyre
Which rules the accents of the moving sphere,
Wilt thou, eternal Harmony! descend,
And join this festive train? for with thee comes
The guide, the guardian of their lovely sports,

Majestic Truth ; and where truth deigns to come,
Her sister Liberty will not be far.
Be present all ye Genii who conduct
The wand'ring footsteps of the youthful bard,
New to your springs and shades ; who touch his ear
With finer sounds ; who heighten to his eye
The bloom of nature, and before him turn
The gayest, happiest attitudes of things.

Oft have the laws of each poetic strain
The critic verse employ'd ; yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, though importing most
A poet's name ; for fruitless is the attempt,
By dull obedience and the curb of rules,
For creeping toil to climb the hard ascent
Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius ; nature's hand
Must point the path, and imp his eagle wings
Exulting o'er the painful steep to soar
High as the summit ; there to breathe at large
Æthereal air ; with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise. These flattering scenes
To this neglected labour court my song ?
Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task
To paint the finest features of the mind,
And to most subtle and mysterious things
Give colour, strength and motion. But the love
Of nature and the muses bid explore,
Thro' secret paths, erewhile untrod by man,
The fair poetic region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,
And shade my temples with unfading flowers
Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,
Where never poet gain'd a wreath before.

From heav'n my strains begin ; from heav'n descends
The flame of genius to the human breast,
And love and beauty, and poetic joy
And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun
Sprung from the east, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp ;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn'd the globe ;
Or wisdom taught the sons of men her lore ;
Then liv'd the eternal *One* ; then deep retir'd
In his unfathom'd essence, view'd at large
The uncreated images of things ;

The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods and streams, the rolling globe,
And wisdom's form celestial. From the first
Of days, on them his love divine he fix'd,
His admiration; till in time complete,
What he admir'd and lov'd, his vital smile
Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
Of life informing each organic frame,
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves;
Hence light and shade alternate; warmth and cold;
And clear autumnal skies and vernal showers,
And all the fair variety of things.

But not alike to every mortal eye
Is this great scene unveil'd. For, since the claims
Of social life, to different labours urge
The active powers of man—with wise intent
The hand of nature on peculiar minds
Imprints a different bias, and to each
Decrees its province in the common toil.
To some she taught the fabric of the sphere,
The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
The golden zones of heaven; to some she gave
To weigh the moment of eternal things,
Of time and space, and fate's unbroken chain,
And will's quick impulse; others by the hand
She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
What healing virtue swells the tender veins
Of herbs and flowers; or what the beams of morn
Draw forth, distilling from the clifted rind
In balmy tears. But some to higher hopes
Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame.
To these the sire omnipotent unfolds
The world's harmonious volume, there to read
The transcript of himself. On every part
They trace the bright impressions of his hand;
In earth, or air, the meadows purple stores,
The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form
Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd
That uncreated beauty, which delights
The mind supreme. They also feel her charms,
Enamour'd; they partake the eternal joy.

As Memnon's marble harp renown'd of old
By fabling Nilus, to the quivering touch

Of Titan's rays, with each repulsive string
Consenting, sounded thro' the warbling air
Unbidden strains ; even so did nature's hand
To certain species of external things,
Attune the finer organs of the mind ;
So the glad impulse of congenial powers,
Or of sweet sound, or fair proportion'd form,
The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,
Thrills through imagination's tender frame,
From nerve to nerve ; all naked and alive
They catch the spreading rays ; till now the soul
At length discloses every tuneful spring,
To that harmonious movement from without,
Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain
Diffuses its enchantment ; fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
And vales of bliss ; the intellectual power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And smiles ; the passions gently sooth'd away,
Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
Alone are waking ; love and joy serene
As airs that fan the summer. O, attend,
Who'er thou art whom these delights can touch,
Whose candid bosom the refining love
Of nature warms, O, listen to my song,
And I will guide thee to her fav'rite walks,
And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her loveliest features to thy view.

Know then, whate'er of nature's pregnant stores,
Whate'er of mimic art's reflected forms
With love and admiration thus inflame
The powers of fancy, her delighted sons
To three illustrious orders have referr'd ;
Three sister graces, whom the painter's hand,
The poet's tongue confesses : The sublime,
The wonderful, the fair. I see them dawn !
I see the radiant visions, where they rise,
More lovely than when Lucifer displays
His beaming forehead thro' the gates of morn,
To lead the train of Phoebus and the spring.

Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
Amid the vast creation ; why ordained
Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame ;

But that the omnipotent might send him forth
In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
As on a boundless theatre to run
The great career of justice ; to exalt
His generous aim to all diviner deeds ;
To shake each partial purpose from his breast ;
And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain
To hold his course unfalt'ring, while the voice
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
Of nature, calls him to his high reward,
The applauding smile of heaven? else wherefore burns,
In mortal bosoms, this unquenched hope
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession ? wherefore darts the mind,
With such resistless ardour to embrace
Majestic forms ; impatient to be free,
Spurning the gross controul of wilful might ;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils ;
Proud to be daring ? Who but rather turns
To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view,
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame ?
Who that, from Alpine heights, his lab'ring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon to survey
Nilus or Ganges rolling his broad tide
Thro' mountains, plains, thro' empires black with shade,
And continents of sand ; will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet ? The high born soul
Disdains to rest her heaven aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tired of earth
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Thro' fields of air ; pursues the flying storm ;
Rides on the volley'd lightning thro' the heavens ;
Or, yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high she soars
The blue profound, and hovering o'er the sun
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light ; beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets ; thro' its burning signs
Exulting circles the perennial wheel
Of nature, and looks back on all the stars,
Whose blended light, as with a milky zone,

Invests the orient. Now amaz'd she views
The empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,
Beyond this concave heaven, their calm abode;
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
Has travel'd the profound six thousand years
Nor yet arriv'd in sight of mortal things.
Even on the barriers of the world untir'd
She meditates the eternal depth below;
Till, half recoiling, down the headlong steep
She plunges; soon o'erwhelmn'd and swallowed up
In the immense of being. There her hopes
Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
Of mortal man, the sov'reign Maker said,
That not in humble or in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown
Power's purple robes, or pleasure's flow'ry lap
The soul should find enjoyment; but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Thro' all the ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.

Call now to mind what high, capacious powers
Lie folded up in man; how far beyond
The praise of mortals, may the eternal growth
Of nature to perfection half divine,
Expand the blooming soul? What pity then
Should sloth's unkindly fogs depress to earth
Her tender blossom; choke the streams of life,
And blast her spring! Far otherwise design'd
Almighty wisdom; nature's happy cares
The obedient heart far otherwise incline.
Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active power
To brisker measures; witness the neglect
Of all familiar prospects, tho' beheld
With transport once; the fond, attentive gaze
Of young astonishment; the sober zeal
Of age, commenting on prodigious things,
For such the bounteous providence of heaven,
In every breast implanting this desire
Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
With unremitted labour to pursue
Those sacred stores that wait the ripening soul,
In truth's exhaustless bosom. What need words
To paint its power? For this the daring youth

Breaks from his weeping, mother's anxious arms,
In foreign climes to rove; the pensive sage,
Heedless of sleep or midnight's harmful damp,
Hangs o'er the sickly taper; and untir'd
The virgin follows, with enchanted step,
The mazes of some wild and wond'rous tale,
From morn to eve; unmindful of her form,
Unmindful of the happy dress that stole
The wishes of the youth, when every maid
With envy pin'd. Hence, finally, by night
The village matron, round the blazing hearth,
Suspends the infant audience with her tales,
Breathing astonishment! of witching rhymes,
And evil spirits; of the death-bed call
To him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd
The orphan's portion: of unquiet souls
Ris'n from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life conceal'd; of shapes that walk
At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of hell around the murderer's bed.
At every solemn pause the crowd recoil,
Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
With shivering sighs; till eager for the event,
Around the beldam all erect they hang,
Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd.

But lo! disclos'd in all her smiling pomp,
Where beauty, onward moving, claims the verse
Her charms inspire: the freely flowing verse
In thy immortal praise, O form divine,
Smooths her mellifluent stream. Thee, beauty, thee,
The regal dome, and thy enlivening ray
The mossy roofs adore; thou, better sun!
For ever beamest on the enchanted heart
Love, and harmonious wonder, and delight
Poetic. Brightest progeny of heaven!
How shall I trace thy features? where select
The roseate hues to emulate thy bloom?
Haste then, my song, thro' nature's wide expanse,
Haste then, and gather all her comeliest wealth,
Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the waters, or the liquid air,
To deck thy lovely labour. Wilt thou fly
With laughing Autumn to the Atlantic isles,
And range with him th' Hesperian field, and see,
Where'er his fingers touch the fruitful grove,

The branches shoot with gold ; where'er his step
Marks the glad soil, the tender clusters glow
With purple ripeness, and invest each hill
As with the blushes of an evening sky.
Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume,
Where gliding thro' his daughter's honor'd shades,
The smooth Peneus from his glassy flood
Reflects purpureal Tempe's pleasant scene ?
Fair Tempe ! haunt belov'd of sylvan powers,
Of nymphs and fawns ; where in the golden age
They play'd in secret on the shady brink
With ancient Pan ; while round their choral steps
Young hours and genial gales with constant hand
Shower'd blossoms, odours, shower'd ambrosial dews
And spring's Elysian bloom. Her flowery store
To thee nor Tempe shall refuse ; nor watch
Of winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits
From thy free spoil. O bear then, unreprov'd,
Thy smiling treasures to the green recess
Where young Dione stays. With sweetest airs
Entice her forth to lend her angel form
For beauty's honour'd image. Hither turn
Thy graceful footsteps ; hither, gentle maid,
Incline thy polish'd forehead ; let thy eyes
Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn ;
And may the fanning breezes waft aside
The radiant locks, dissolving as it bends
With airy softness from the marble neck,
The cheek fair blooming, and the rosy lip
Where winning smiles and pleasure sweet as love,
With sanctity and wisdom, temp'ring blend
Their soft allurement. Then the pleasing force
Of nature, and her kind parental care,
Worthier I'd sing ; then all the enamour'd youth
With each admiring virgin, to my lyre
Should throng attentive, while I point on high
Where beauty's living image, like the morn
That wakes in zephyr's arms the blushing May,
Moves onward ; or as Venus, when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car, and smil'd,
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And each coerulean sister of the flood
With fond acclaim attend her o'er the waves,
To seek the Idalian bower. Ye smiling band
Of youths and virgins, who, thro' all the maze

Of young desire, with rival steps pursue
This charm of beauty ; if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite, hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words.
I do not mean to wake the gloomy form
Of superstition drest in wisdom's garb,
To damp your tender hopes ; I do not mean
To bid the jealous thund'rer fire the heaven
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth
To fright you from your joys ; my cheerful song
With better omens calls you to the field,
Pleas'd with your gen'rous ardour in the chace,
And warm as you. Then tell me, for you know,
Does beauty ever deign to dwell where health
And active use are strangers ? Is her charm
Confess'd in aught, whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless ? Or did nature mean
This awful stamp the herald of a lye ;
To hide the shame of discord and disease,
And catch with fair hypocrisy the heart
Of idle faith ? O no ! with better cares,
Th' indulgent mother, conscious how infirm
Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,
By this illustrious image, in each kind
Still more illustrious where the object holds
Its native powers most perfect, she by this
Illumes the headlong impulse of desire,
And sanctifies his choice. The generous glebe
Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear tract
Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,
The bloom of nectar'd fruitage ripe to sense,
And every charm of animated things,
Are only pledges of a state sincere,
Th' integrity and order of their frame,
When all is well within, and every end
Accomplish'd. Thus was beauty sent from heaven
The lovely ministress of truth and good
In this dark world : for truth and good are one,
And beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like precipitation. Wherefore then,
O sons of earth ! would you dissolve the tye ?
O wherefore, with a rash, imperfect aim,
Seek you those flow'ry joys with which the hand
Of lavish fancy paints each flattering scene
Where beauty seems to dwell, nor once enquire
Where is the sanction of eternal truth,

Or where the seal of undeceitful good,
To save your search from folly? Wanting these,
Lo! beauty withers in your void embrace,
And with the glitt'ring of an idiot's toy
Did fancy mock your vows. Nor let the gleam
Of youthful hope that shines upon your hearts,
Be chill'd or clouded at this awful task
To learn the lore of undeceitful good,
And truth eternal. Tho' the poisonous charms
Of baleful superstition guide the feet
Of servile numbers, through a dreary way
To their abode, through deserts, thorns and mire;
Add leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn
To muse, at last, amidst the ghostly gloom
Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells;
To walk with spectres through the midnight shade,
And to the screaming owl's accursed song
Attune the dreadful workings of his heart;
Yet be not you dismay'd. A gentler star
Your lovely search illumines. From the grove
Where wisdom talk'd with her Athenian sons,
Could my ambitious hands entwine a wreath
Of *Plato's* olive with the Mantuan bay,
Then should my powerful voice at once dispel
These monkish horrors: then in light divine
Disclose the Elysian prospect, where the steps
Of those whom nature charms, through blooming walks,
Thro' fragrant mountains and poetic streams,
Admit the train of sages, heroes, bards,
Led by their winged genius and the choir
Of laurell'd science and harmonious art,
Proceed exulting to the eternal shrine,
Where truth enthron'd with the celestial twins,
The undivided part'ners of her sway,
With good and beauty reigns. O let not us,
Lull'd by luxurious pleasure's languid strain,
Or crouching to the frowns of bigot rage,
O let not us a moment pause to join
The godlike band. And if the gracious power
That first awaken'd my untutor'd song,
Will to my invocation breathe anew
The tuneful spirit; then thro' all our paths,
Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre
Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,
When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
Of luxury's allurement; whether firm

Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
To urge bold virtue's unremitted nerve,
And wake the strong divinity of soul
That conquers chance and fate; or whether struck
For sounds of triumph, to proclaim her toils
Upon the lofty summit; round her brow
To twine the wreath of incorruptive praise;
To trace her hallow'd light thro' future worlds,
And bless Heaven's image in the heart of man.

Thus with a faithful aim have we presum'd,
Adventurous, to delineate nature's form;
Whether in vast, majestic pomp array'd,
Or drest for pleasing wonder, or serene
In beauty's rosy smile. It now remains,
Thro' various being's fair-proportion'd scale,
To trace the rising lustre of her charms,
From their first twilight, shining forth at length,
To full meridian splendour. Of degree
The least and lowliest, in the effusive warmth
Of colours mingling with a random blaze,
Doth beauty dwell. Then higher in the line
And variation of determin'd shape,
Where truth's eternal measures mark the bound
Of circle, cube, or sphere. The third ascent
Unites this varied symmetry of parts
With colour's bland allurement; as the pearl
Shines in the concave of its azure bed,
And painted shells indent their speckled wreath.
Then more attractive rise the blooming forms,
Through which the breath of nature has infus'd
Her genial power to draw, with pregnant veins,
Nutritious moisture from the bounteous earth,
In fruit and seed prolific: thus the flowers
Their purple honors with the spring resume;
And such the stately tree which autumn bends
With blushing treasures. But more lovely still,
In nature's charm, where, to the full consent
Of complicated members, to the bloom
Of colour, and the vital change of growth,
Life's holy flame and piercing sense are given,
And active motion speaks the temper'd soul:
So moves the bird of Juno; so the steed
With rival ardor beats the dusty plain,
And faithful dogs with eager airs of joy
Salute their fellows. Thus doth beauty dwell

There most conspicuous, ev'n in outward shape,
Where dawns the high expression of a mind;
By steps conducting our enraptur'd search
To that eternal origin, whose power,
Thro' all the unbounded symmetry of things,
Like rays effulging from the parent sun,
This endless mixture of her charms diffus'd.
Mind, mind alone, (bear witness, earth and heaven!)
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beautious and sublime; here hand in hand,
Sit paramount the Graces; here enthron'd,
Celestial Venus, with divinest airs,
Invites the soul to never-fading joy.
Look, then, abroad thro' nature, to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres
Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense;
And speak, O man! does this capacious scene
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
Amid the croud of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country, hail!
For lo! the tyrant prostrate on the dust,
And Rome again is free? Is aught so fair
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
In nature's fairest forms, is ought so fair
As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
The graceful tear that streams for others' woes?
Or the mild majesty of private life,
Where peace with ever blooming olive crowns
The gate; where honour's liberal hands effuse
Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene?
Once more search, undismay'd, the dark profound
Where nature works in secret; view the beds
Of mineral treasure, and the eternal vault
That bounds the hoary ocean; trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change
Their elemental round; behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever active flame;

Then to the secrets of the working mind
Attentive turn; from dim oblivion call
Her fleet ideal band; and bid them go!
Break thro' time's barrier, and o'ertake the hour
That saw the heavens created; then declare
If aught were found in those external scenes
To move thy wonder now. For what are all
The forms which brute, unconscious matter wears,
Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts?
Not reaching to the heart, soon feeble grows
The superficial impulse; dull their charms,
And satiate soon, and pall the languid eye.
Not so the moral species, or the powers
Of genius and design; the ambitious mind
There sees herself; by these congenial forms
Touch'd and awaken'd, with intenser act
She bends each nerve, and meditates well pleas'd
Her features in the mirror. For of all
The inhabitants of earth, to man alone
Creative wisdom gave to lift his eye
To truth's eternal measures; thence to frame
The sacred laws of action and of will,
Discerning justice from unequal deeds,
And temperance from folly. But beyond
This energy of truth, whose dictates bind
Assenting reason, the benignant sire,
To deck the honour'd paths of just and good,
Has added bright imagination's rays;
Where virtue, rising from the awful depth
Of truth's mysterious bosom, doth forsake
The unadorn'd condition of her birth
And dress'd by fancy in ten thousand hues,
Assumes a various feature, to attract,
With charms responsive to each gazer's eye,
The hearts of men. Amid his rural walk,
The ingenuous youth whom solitude inspires
With purest wishes, from the pensive shade
Beholds her moving like a virgin-muse
That wakes her lyre to some indulgent theme
Of harmony and wonder; while among
The herd of servile minds, her strenuous form
Indignant flashes on the patriot's eye,
And through the rolls of memory appeals
To ancient honour; or in act serene,
Yet watchful, raises the majestic sword
Of public power, from dark ambition's reach
To guard the sacred volume of the laws.

Genius of antient Greece! whose faithful steps
Well pleas'd I follow thro' the sacred paths
Of nature and of science; nurse divine
Of all heroic deeds and fair desires!
O! let the breath of thy extended praise
Inspire my kindling bosom to the height
Of this untempted theme. Nor be my thoughts
Presumptuous counted, if, amid the calm
That smooths this vernal evening into smiles,
I steal impatient from the sordid haunts
Of strife and low ambition, to attend
Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade,
By their malignant footsteps ne'er profan'd.
Descend, propitious! to my favor'd eye;
Such in thy mien, thy warm exalted air,
As when the Persian tyrant, foil'd and stung
With shame and desperation, gnash'd his teeth
To see thee rend the pageants of his throne;
And at the lightning of thy lifted spear
Crouch'd like a slave. Bring all thy martal spoils,
Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphant songs,
Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike sires
Of civil wisdom, thy heroic youth
Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way
Thro' fair Lyceum's walk, the green retreats
Of Academus, and the thymy vale,
Where oft enchanted with Socratic sounds,
Ilissus pure devolv'd his tuneful stream
In gentle murmurs. From the blooming store
Of these auspicious fields, may I unblam'd
Transplant some living blossoms, to adorn
My native clime: while far above the flight
Of fancy's plume aspiring, I unlock
The springs of ancient wisdom; while I join
Thy name thrice honour'd! with the immortal praise
Of nature; while to my compatriot youth
I point the high example of thy sons,
And tune to Attic themes the British lyre.

ARGUMENT.

THE *separation of the works of the imagination from philosophy, the cause of their abuse among the moderns.—Prospect of their reunion under the influence of public liberty. Enumeration of accidental pleasures, which increase the effect of objects delightful to the imagination.—The pleasures of sense. Particul r circumstances of the mind. Discovery of truths. Perception of contrivance and design. Emotion of the passions. All the natural passions partake of a pleasing sensation, with the final cause of this constitution illustrated by an allegorical vision and exemplified in sorrow, pity, terror, and indignation.*

BOOK II.

WHEN shall the laurel and the vocal string
Resume their honours? When shall we behold
The tuneful tongue, the Promethean hand
Aspire to ancient praise? Alas! how faint,
How slow the dawn of beauty and of truth
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothic night
Which yet involve the nations! Long they groan'd
Beneath the furies of rapacious force;
Oft as the gloomy north, with iron swarms
Tempestuous pouring from her frozen caves,
Blasted the Italian shore, and swept the works
Of liberty and wisdom down the gulph
Of all devouring night. As long immur'd
In noon-tide darkness, by the glimm'ring lamp
Each muse and each fair science pin'd away
The sordid hours; while foul, barbarian hands
Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
At last the muses rose and spurn'd their bonds,
And wildly warbling, scatter'd, as they flew,
Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclusa's bowers
To Arno's myrtle border and the shore
Of soft Parthenope. But still the rage

Of dire ambition, and gigantic power,
From public aims, and from the busy walk
Of civil commerce, drove the bolder train
Of penetrating science, to the cells,
Where studious ease consumes the silent hour
In shadowy searches and unfruitful care.
Thus from their guardians torn, the tender arts
Of mimic fancy and harmonious joy,
To priestly domination and the lust
Of lawless courts, their amiable toil
For three inglorious ages have resign'd,
In vain reluctant; and Torquato's tongue
Was turn'd for slavish peans at the throne
Of tinsel pomp; and Raphael's magic hand
Effus'd its fair creation to enchant
The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes
To blind belief; while on their prostrate necks
The sable tyrant plants his heel secure.
But now behold! the radiant æra dawns,
When freedom's ample fabric, fix'd at length
For endless years on Albion's happy shore
In full proportion, once more shall extend
To all the kindred powers of social bliss
A common mansion, a parental roof.
There shall the virtues, there shall wisdom's train,
Their long lost friends rejoining, as of old,
Embrace the smiling family of arts,
The muses and the graces. Then no more
Shall vice distracting their delicious gifts
To aims abhorr'd with high distaste and scorn
Turn from their charm the philosophic eye,
The patriot bosom: then no more the paths
Of public care or intellectual toil,
Alone by footsteps haughty and severe,
The gloomy state he trod; the harmonious muse
And her persuasive sisters then shall plant
Their sheltering laurels o'er the bleak ascent,
And shed their flowers along the rugged way.
Arm'd with the lyre, already have we dar'd,
To pierce divine philosophy's retreats
And teach the muse her lore; already strove
Their long divided honours to unite,
While tempering this deep argument we sang
Of truth and beauty. Now the same fair task
Impends; now urging our ambitious toil,
We hasten to recount the various springs

Of adventitious pleasure, which adjoin
Their grateful influence to the prime effect
Of objects grand or beauteous, and inlarge
The complicated joy. The sweets of sense,
Do they not oft with kind accession flow,
To raise harmonious fancy's native charm?
So while we taste the fragrance of the rose,
Glows not her blush the fairer? While we view
Amid the noontide walk a limpid rill
Gush thro' the trickling herbage, to the thirst
Of summer yielding the delicious draught
Of cool refreshment; o'er the mossy brink
Shines not the surface clearer, and the waves
With sweeter music murmur as they flow?

Nor this alone; the various lot of life
Oft from external circumstance assumes
A moment's disposition to rejoice
In those delights which at a different hour
Would pass unheeded. Fair the face of spring,
When rural songs and odours wake the morn,
To every eye; but how much more to his,
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffus'd
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair,
When first with fresh-born vigor he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain!

Or shall I mention, where celestial truth
Her awful light discloses, to effulge
A more majestic pomp on beauty's frame?
For man loves knowledge, and the beams of truth
More welcome touch his understanding eye,
Than all the blandishments of sound, his ear,
Than all of taste his tongue. Nor ever yet
The melting rainbow's vernal tinctur'd hues
To me have shone so pleasing, as when first
The hand of science pointed out the path
In which the sun-beams gleaming from the west
Fall on the watry cloud, whose darksome veil
Involves the orient; and that trickling show'r
Piercing thro' every crystaline convex
Of clust'ring dew-drops to their flight oppos'd,
Recoil at length where concave all behind
The internal surface of each glassy orb

Repells their forward passage into air;
That thence direct they seek the radiant goal
From which their course began; and, as they strike
In diff'rent lines the gazer's obvious eye,
Assume a diff'rent lustre, thro' the brede
Of colours changing from the splendid rose
To the pale violet's dejected hue.

Or shall we touch that kind access of joy,
That springs to each fair object, while we trace,
Thro' all its fabric, wisdom's artful aim
Disposing every part, and gaining still
By mean's proportion'd her benignant end?
Speak, ye, the pure delight, whose favour'd steps
The lamp of science thro' the jealous maze
Of nature guides, when haply you reveal
Her secret honors; whether in the sky,
The beauteous laws of light, the central pow'rs
That wheel the pensile planets round the year;
Whether in wonders of the rolling deep,
Or smiling fruits of pleasure-pregnant earth,
Or fine adjusted springs of life and sense
You scan the counsels of their author's hand.

What, when to rise the meditated scene,
The flame of passion, thro' the struggling soul
Deep kindled, shows across that sudden blaze
The object of its rapture vast of size,
With fiercer colors and a night of shade?
What like a storm from their capacious bed
The sounding seas o'erwhelming, when the might
Of these eruptions, working from the depth
Of man's strong apprehension, shakes his frame
Ev'n to the base; from every naked sense
Of pain or pleasure dissipating all
Opinion's feeble cov'rings, and the veil
Spun from the cobweb-fashion of the times
To hide the feeling heart? Then nature speaks
Her genuine language, and the words of men,
Big with the very motion of their souls,
Declare with what accumulated force
The impetuous nerve of passion urges on
The native weight and energy of things.

Yet more; her honors where nor beauty claim,
Nor shows of good the thirsty sense allure,

From passion's power alone our nature holds
Essential pleasure. Passion's fierce illapse
Rouses the mind's whole fabric ; with supplies
Of daily impulse keeps the elastic pow'rs
Intensely poiz'd, and polishes anew
By that collision all the fine machine ;
Else rust would rise, and foulness, by degrees
Incumb'ring, choak at last what heaven design'd
For ceaseless motion and a round of toil
But say, does every passion men endure
Thus minister delight ? That name indeed
Becomes the rosy breath of love ; becomes
The radiant smiles of joy, the applauding hand
Of admiration ; but the bitter show'r
That sorrow sheds upon a brother's grave,
But the dumb palsy of nocturnal fear,
Or those consuming fires that gnaw the heart
Of panting indignation, find we there
To move delight ? Then listen, while my tongue
The unalter'd will of heav'n with faithful awe
Reveals ; what old Harmodious wont to teach
My early age ; Harmodious who had weigh'd
Within his learned mind whate'er the schools
Of wisdom, or thy lonely whispering voice,
O faithful nature ! dictate of the laws
Which govern and support this mighty frame
Of universal being. Of the hours
From morn to eve have stole unmark'd away,
While mute attention hung upon his lips,
As thus the sage his awful tale began.

'Twas in the windings of an ancient wood,
When spotless youth with solitude resigns
To sweet philosophy the studious day,
What time pale autumn shades the silent eve,
Musing I rov'd. Of good and evil much,
And much of Mortal man my thought revolv'd
When starting full on fancy's gushing eye,
The mournful image of Parthenia's fate,
That hour, O long belov'd and long deplor'd !
When blooming youth, nor gentlest wisdom's arts,
Nor Hymen's honors gather'd for thy brow,
Nor all thy lover's all thy father's tears
Avail'd to snatch thee from the cruel grave ;
Thy agonizing looks, thy last farewell
Struck to the inmost feeling of my soul

As with the hand of death. At once the shade
More horrid nodded o'er me, and the winds
With hoarser murm'ring shook the branches, Dark
As midnight storms, the scene of human things,
Appear'd before me; deserts, burning sands
Where the parch'd adder dies; the frozen south,
And desolation blasting all the west
With rapine and with murder; tyrant pow'r
Here sits inthron'd in blood; the baleful charms
Of superstition there infect the skies,
And turn the sun to horror Gracious heaven!
What is the life of man? Or cannot these,
Nor these portents thy awful will suffice?
That propagated thus beyond their scope,
They rise to act their cruelties anew
In my afflicted bosom, thus decreed
The universal sensitive of pain,
The wretched heir of evils not its own!

Thus I, impatient; when at once effus'd,
A flashing torrent of celestial day
Burst through the shadowy void. With slow descent
A purple cloud came floating through the sky,
And poiz'd at length within the circling trees,
Hung obvious to my view; till opening wide
It's lucid orb, a more than human form
Emerging lean'd majestic o'er my head,
And instant thunder shook the conscious grove.
Then melted into air the liquid cloud,
And all the shining vision stood reveal'd,
A wreath of palm his ample forehead bound,
And o'er his shoulder, mantling to his knee,
Flow'd the transparent robe, around his waist
Collected with a radiant zone of gold
Etherial; there in mystic signs engrav'd
I read his office high and sacred name,
Genius of human kind. Appall'd I gaz'd
The godlike presence; for athwart his brow
Displeasure, temper'd with a mild concern,
Look'd down reluctant on me, and his words
Like distant thunders broke the murm'ring air.
Vain are thy thoughts, O child of mortal birth,
And impotent thy tongue. Is thy short span
Capacious of this universal frame?
Thy wisdom all-sufficient? Thou, alas!
Dost thou aspire to judge between the Lord

Of nature and his works? to lift thy voice
Against the sovereign order he decreed
All good and lovely? To blaspheme the bands
Of tenderness innate and social love,
Holiest of things! by which the general orb
Of being, as with adamantine links,
Was drawn to perfect union and sustain'd
From everlasting? Hast thou felt the pangs
Of soft'ning sorrow, of indignant zeal
So grievous to the soul, as thence to wish
The ties of nature broken from thy frame;
That so thy selfish, unrelenting heart
May cease to mourn its lot, no longer then
The wretched heir of evils not its own?
O fair benevolence of gen'rous minds!
O man by nature form'd for all mankind!

He spoke—abash'd and silent I remain'd,
As conscious of my lips' offence and aw'd
Before his presence, though my secret soul
Disdain'd the imputation. On the ground
I fix'd my eyes; till from his airy couch
He stoop'd sublime, and touching with his hand
My dazzling forehead, Raise thy sight he cry'd,
And let thy sense convince thy erring tongue.

I look'd, and lo! the former scene was chang'd
For verdant valleys and surrounding trees,
A solitary prospect, wide and wild,
Rush'd on my senses. 'Twas a horrid pile
Of hills with many a shaggy forest mix'd
With many a sable cliff and glitt'ring stream.
Aloft recumbent o'er the hanging ridge,
The brown woods wav'd, while ever trickling springs
Wash'd from the naked roots of oak and pine,
The crumbling soil; and still at every fall
Down the steep windings of the channell'd rock,
Remurm'ring rush'd the congregated floods
With hoarser inundation; till at last
They reach'd a grassy plain, which from the skirts
Of that high desert spread her verdant lap,
And drank the gushing moisture, where confin'd
In one smooth current, o'er the lillied vale
Clearer than glass it flow'd. Autumnal spoils
Luxuriant spreading to the rays of morn,
Blush'd o'er the cliffs, whose half incircling mounds,

As in a sylvan theatre enclos'd
That flow'ry level. On the river's brink
I spy'd a fair pavillion, which diffus'd
Its floating umbrage 'mid the silver shade
Of osiers. Now the western sun reveal'd
Between two parting cliffs his golden orb,
And pour'd across the shadow of the hills,
On rocks and floods, a yellow stream of light
That cheer'd the solemn scene. My list'ning pow'rs
Were aw'd, and every thought in silence hung,
And wondering expectation. Then the voice
Of that celestial pow'r, the mystic show
Declaring, thus my deep attention call'd.

Inhabitant of earth, to whom is giv'n
The gracious ways of Providence to learn,
Receive my sayings with a stedfast ear———
Know then, the sovereign spirit of the world,
Though self-collected from etherial time,
Within his own deep essence he beheld
The circling bounds of happiness unite;
Yet by immense benignity inclin'd
To spread around him that primeval joy
Which fill'd himself, he rais'd his plastic arm,
And sounded through the hollow depth of space
The strong, creative mandate. Strait arose
These heavenly orbs, the glad abodes of life
Effusive kindled by his breath divine
Thro' endless forms of being. Each inhal'd
From him its portion of the vital flame,
In measure such, that from the wide complex
Of co-existent orders, one might rise,
One order, all involving and entire.
He too beholding in the sacred light
Of his essential reason, all the shapes
Of swift contingence, all successive ties
Of action propagated through the sum
Of possible existence, he at once,
Down the long series of eventful time,
So fix'd the dates of beings so dispos'd
To every living soul of every kind,
The field of motion and the hour of rest,
That all conspir'd to his supreme design,
To universal good; with full accord,
Answ'ring the mighty model he had chose,
The best and fairest of unnumber'd worlds

That lay from everlasting in the store
Of his divine conceptions. Nor content
By one exertion of creating pow'r
His goodness to reveal; thro' every age,
Thro' every moment up the tract of time,
His parent hand with ever new increase
Of happiness and virtue has adorn'd
The vast harmonious frame: his parent hand
From the mute shell-fish gasping on the shore,
To men, to angels, to celestial minds,
Forever leads the generations on
To higher scenes of being; while supplied
From day to day by his enliving breath,
Inferior orders in succession rise
To fill the void below. As flame ascends
As bodies to their proper centre move,
As the poiz'd ocean to the attracting moon
Obedient swells, and every headlong stream
Devolves its winding waters to the main;
So all things, which have life aspire to God
The sun of being, boundless, unimpair'd,
Centre of souls! Nor does the faithful voice
Of nature cease to prompt their eager steps
Aright; nor is the care of heaven withheld
From granting to the task proportion'd aid;
That in their stations all may persevere
To climb the ascent of being, and approach
Forever nearer to the life divine.

That rocky pile thou seest, that verdant lawn
Fresh water'd from the mountains, Let the scene
Paint in thy fancy the primeval seat
Of man, and where the will supreme ordain'd
His mansion, that pavilion fair diffus'd
Along the shady brink, in this recess
To wear the appointed season of his youth;
Till riper hours should open to his toil
The high communion of superior minds,
Of consecrated heroes and of gods.
Nor did the Sire omnipotent forget
His tender bloom to cherish; nor withheld
Celestial footsteps from his green abode.
Oft from the radiant honours of his throne,
He sent whom most he lov'd, the sovereign fair,
The effluence of his glory, whom he plac'd
Before his eyes for ever to behold;

The goddess from whose inspiration flows
The toil of patriots, the delight of friends;
Without whose work divine, in heaven or earth,
Nought lovely, nought propitious comes to pass,
Nor hope, nor praise, nor honour. Her the sire
Gave it in charge to rear the blooming mind,
The folded powers to open, to direct
The growth luxuriant of his young desires,
And from the laws of this majestic world
To teach him what was good. As thus the nymph
Her daily care attended, by her side
With constant steps her gay companion stay'd,
The fair Euphrosyne, the gentle queen
Of smiles, and graceful gladness, and delights
That cheer alike the hearts of mortal men
And powers immortal. See the shining pair!
Behold, where from his dwelling now disclos'd,
They quit their youthful charge and seek the skies.
I look'd, and on the flow'ry turf there stood,
Between two radiant forms, a smiling youth
Whose tender cheeks display'd the vernal flower
Of beauty; sweetest innocence illum'd
His bashful eyes, and on his polished brow
Sat young simplicity. With fond regard
He view'd the associates, as their steps they mov'd;
The younger chief his ardent eyes detain'd,
With mild regret invoking her return.
Bright as the star of evening she appear'd
Amid the dusky scene. Eternal youth
O'er all her form its glowing honors breath'd
And smiles eternal, from her candid eyes,
Flow'd like the dewy lustre of the morn
Effusive trembling on the placid waves.
The spring of heaven had shed its blushing spoils
To bind her sable tresses; full diffus'd
Her yellow mantle floated on the breeze;
And in her hand she wav'd a living branch
Rich with immortal fruits, of power to calm
The wrathful heart, and from the bright'ning eyes
To chase the cloud of sadness. More sublime
The heav'nly partner mov'd. The prime of age
Compos'd her steps. The presence of a god,
High on the circle of her brow inthron'd,
From each majestic motion darted awe,
Devoted awe! till cherished by her looks
Benevolent and meek, confiding love

To filial rapture softened all the soul.
Free in her graceful hand she poiz'd the sword
Of chaste dominion. An heroic crown
Display'd the old simplicity of pomp
Around her honor'd head. A matron's robe,
White as the sunshine streams thro' vernal clouds,
Her stately form invested. Hand in hand
The immortal pair forsook the enamell'd green,
Ascending slowly. Rays of limpid light
Gleam'd round their path; celestial rounds were heard
And thro' the fragrant air ætherial dews
Distill'd around them; till at once the clouds
Disparting wide in midway sky, withdrew
Their airy veil, and left a bright expanse
Of empyrean flame where spent and drown'd,
Afflicted vision plung'd in vain to scan
What object it involv'd. My feeble eyes
Indured not. Bending down to earth I stood,
With dumb attention. Soon a female voice,
As wat'ry murmurs sweet, or warbling shades
With sacred invocation thus began.

Father of gods and mortals! whose right arm
With reins eternal guides the moving heavens,
Bend thy propitious ear. Behold well pleas'd
I seek to finish thy divine decree.
With frequent steps I visit yonder seat
Of man, thy offspring; from tender seeds
Of justice and of wisdom, to involve
The latent honors of his generous frame;
Till thy conducting hand shall raise his lot
From earth's dim scene to these ætherial walks
The temple of thy glory. But not me,
Not my directing voice he oft requires,
Or hears delighted; this inchanting maid,
The associate thou hast given me, her alone
He loves, O father! absent, her he craves;
And but for her glad presence ever join'd,
Rejoices not in mine; that all my hopes
This thy benignant purpose to fulfil,
I deem uncertain; and my daily cares
Unfruitful all in vain, unless by thee
Still farther aided in the work divine.

She ceas'd; a voice more awful thus reply'd,
O thou! in whom forever I delight,

Fairer than all the inhabitants of heaven,
Best image of thy author! far from thee
Be disappointment, or distaste, or blame;
Who soon or late shall every work fulfill,
And no resistance find. If man refuse
To hearken to thy dictates; or allur'd
By meaner joys, to any other pow'r
Transfer the honors due to thee alone;
That joy which he pursues he ne'er shall taste,
That power in whom delighteth ne'er behold.
Go then once more, and happy be thy toil;
Go then! but let not this thy smiling friend
Partake thy footsteps. In her stead, behold!
With thee the sons of Nemesis I send;
The fiend abhorr'd! whose vengeance takes account
Of sacred order's violated laws.
See where he calls thee, burning to begone,
Fierce to exhaust the tempest of his wrath
On yon devoted head. But thou, my child,
Controul his cruel frenzy, and protect
Thy tender charge. That when despair shall grasp
His agonizing bosom, he may learn,
That he may learn to love the gracious hand
Alone sufficient in that hour of ill,
To save his feeble spirit; then confess
Thy genuine honours, O excelling fair!
When all the plagues that wait the dearly will
Of this avenging demon, all the storms
Of night infernal, serve but to display
The energy of thy superior charms,
With mildest awe triumphant o'er his rage,
And shining clearer in the horrid gloom.

Here ceas'd that awful voice, and soon I felt
The cloudy curtain of refreshing eve
Was clos'd once more, from that immortal fire
Shelt'ring my eye-lids Looking up, I view'd
A vast gigantic spectre striding on
Thro' murm'ring thunders and a waste of clouds,
With dreadful action, Black as night his brow
Relentless frowns invok'd. His savage limbs
With sharp impatience violent he writh'd
As thro' convulsive anguish; and his hand
Arm'd with a scorpion lash, full oft he rais'd
In madness to his bosom; while his eyes
Rain'd bitter tears, and bellowing loud he shook

The void with horror. Silent by his side
The virgin came. No discomposure stirr'd
Her features. From the glooms which hung around,
No stain of darkness mingled with the beam
Of her divine effulgence. Now they stoop
Upon the river bank; and now to hail
His wonted guests with eager steps advanc'd
The unsuspecting inmate of the shade.

As when a famish'd wolf that all night long
Had rang'd the Alpine snows; by chance at morn
Sees from a cliff incumbent o'er the smoke
Of some lone village, a neglected kid
That strays along the wild for herb or spring;
Down from the winding ridge he sweeps amain,
And thinks he tears him; so with tenfold rage,
The monster sprung remorseless on his prey.
Amaz'd the stripling stood! with panting breast
Feebly he pour'd the lamentable wail
Of helpless consternation, struck at once,
And rooted to the ground. The queen beheld
His terror; and with looks of tend'rest care
Advanc'd to save him. Soon the tyrant felt
Her awful power. His keen tempestuous arm
Hung nerveless, nor descended where his rage
Had aim'd the deadly blow; then dumb retir'd
With sullen rancour. Lo! the sovereign maid
Folds, with a mother's arms, the fainting boy,
Till life rekindles in his rosy cheek;
Then grasps his hand, and cheers him with her tongue.

O wake thee, rouze thy spirit! Shall the spite
Of yon tormentor thus appall thy heart,
While I, thy friend and guardian am at hand
To rescue and to heal? O let thy soul
Remember, what the will of heav'n ordains
Is ever good for all; and if for all,
Then good for thee. Nor only by the warmth
And soothing sunshine of delightful things.
Do minds grow up and flourish. Oft misled
By that bland light, the young unpractis'd views
Of reason wander through a fatal road,
Far from their native aim; as if, to lie
Inglorious in the fragrant shade, and wait
The soft access of ever circling joys,
Were all the end of being. Ask thyself,

This pleasing error, did it ever lull
Thy wishes? Has thy constant heart refus'd
The silken fetters of delicious ease?
Or when divine Euphrosyne appear'd
Within this dwelling, did not thy desires
Hang far below that measure of thy fate,
Which I reveal'd before thee? and thy eyes,
Impatient of my counsels, turn away
To drink the soft effusion of her smiles?
Know then, for this the everlasting sire
Deprives thee of her presence, and instead,
O wise and still benevolent! ordains
This horrid visage hither to pursue
My steps; that so thy nature may discern
Its real good, and what alone can save
Thy feeble spirit in this hour of ill
From folly and despair. O yet belov'd!
Let not this headlong terror quite overwhelm
Thy scatter'd powers; nor fatal deem the rage
Of this tormentor, nor his proud assault,
While I am here to vindicate thy toil,
Above the generous question of thy arm.
Brave by thy fears, and in thy weakness strong,
This hour he triumphs; but confront his might,
And dare him to the combat; then with ease,
Disarm'd and quell'd, his fierceness he resigns
To bondage and to scorn; while thus inur'd
By watchful danger, by unceasing toil,
The immortal mind, superior to his fate,
Amid the outrage of external things,
Firm as the solid base of this great world,
Rests on his own foundations. Blow ye winds!
Ye waves! ye thunders! roll your tempests on;
Shake, ye old pillars of the marble sky,
Till all its orbs, and all its worlds of fire
Be loosened from their seats; yet still serene,
The unconquer'd mind looks down upon the wreck;
And, ever stronger as the storms advance,
Firm through the closing ruin holds his way,
Where nature calls him to the destin'd goal.

So spake the goddess, while through all her frame
Celestial raptures flow'd, in every word,
In every motion kindling warmth divine
To seize who listened. Vehement and swift,
As lightning fires the aromatic shade

In Æthiopean fields, the stripling felt
Her inspiration catch his fervid soul,
And starting from his langour thus exclaim'd.

Then let the trial come! and witness thou,
If terror be upon me; if I shrink
To meet the storm, or falter in my strength,
When hardest it besets me. Do not think
That I am fearful and infirm of soul,
As late thy eyes beheld; for thou hast chang'd
My nature: thy commanding voice has wak'd
My languid powers to bear the boldly on,
Where'er the will divine my path ordains
Through toil or peril; only do not thou
Forsake me; O be thou forever near,
That I may listen to thy sacred voice,
And guide by thy decrees my constant feet.
But say, for ever are my eyes bereft?
Say, shall the fair Euphrosyne not once
Appear again to charm me! Thou, in heaven!
O thou eternal arbiter of things!
Be thy great bidding done; for who am I
To question thy appointment? Let the frowns
Of this avenger every morn o'ercast
The cheerful dawn, and every evening damp,
With double night, my dwelling; I will learn
To hail them both, and unrepining bear
His hateful presence; but permit my tongue
One glad request, and, if my deeds may find
Thy awful eye propitious, O restore
The rosy featur'd maid, again to cheer
This lonely seat, and bless me with her smiles.
He spoke; when instant, through the sable glooms,
With which that furious presence had involv'd
The ambient air, a flood of radiance came
Swift as the lightning flash; the melting clouds
Flew diverse, and, amid the blue serene
Euphrosyne appeard. With sprightly step
The nymph alighted on the irriguous lawn,
And to her wond'ring audience thus began.

Lo! I am here to answer to your vows,
And be the meeting fortunate; I come
With joyful tidings: we shall part no more.
Hark! how the gentle Echo, from her cell
Talks through the cliffs, and murm'ring o'er the stream,

Repeats the accent, 'we shall part no more.'
O my delightful friends, well pleas'd, on high,
The father has beheld you, while the might
Of that stern foe with bitter trial prov'd
Your equal doings; then forever spake
The high decree; that thou, celestial maid,
Howe'er that grisly phantom on thy steps
May sometimes dare intrude, yet never more
Shalt thou, descending to the abode of man,
Alone endure the rancour of his arm,
Or leave thy lov'd Euphrosyne behind.
She ended; and the whole romantic scene
Immediate vanish'd; rocks, and woods, and rills
The mantling tent and each mysterious form
Flew like the pictures of a morning dream,
When sunshine fills the bed. A while I stood
Perplex'd and giddy, till the radiant power,
Who bade the visionary landscape rise,
As up to him I turn'd with gentlest looks,
Preventing my enquiry, thus began.

There let thy soul acknowledge its complaint
How blind, how impious! There behold the ways
Of heaven's eternal destiny to man,
For ever just, benevolent and wise;
That virtue's awful steps, howe'er pursued
By vexing fortune and intrusive pain,
Should never be divided from her chaste,
Her fair attendant, pleasure. Need I urge
Thy tardy thought thro' all the various round
Of this existence, that thy soft'ning soul
At length may learn, what energy the hand
Of virtue mingles in the bitter tide
Of passions swelling with distress and pain,
To mitigate the sharp with gracious drops
Of cordial pleasure? Ask the faithful youth,
Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd
So often fills his arms; so often draws
His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
O! he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds
Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
That sacred hour when stealing from the noise
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance soothes
With virtue's kindest looks, his aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture. Ask the crowd

Which flies impatient from the village walk
To climb the neighb'ring cliffs, when far below
The cruel winds have hurl'd upon the coast
Some hapless bark; while sacred pity melts
The general eye, terror's icy hand
Smites their distorted limbs and horrent hair:
While every mother closer to her breast
Catches her child, and pointing where the waves
Foam through the shatter'd vessel, shrieks aloud,
As one poor wretch that spreads his piteous arms
For succour, swallow'd by the roaring surge,
As now another dash'd against the rocks,
Drops lifeless down; O deemest thou indeed
No kind endearment here by nature given
To mutual terror and compassion's tears?
No sweetly melting softness which attracts,
O'er all that edge of pain, the social powers
To this their proper action and their end?
Ask thy own heart: When, at the midnight hour,
Slow through that studious gloom, thy pausing eye,
Led by the glimmering taper, moves around
The sacred volumes of the dead, the songs
Of Grecian bards, and records writ by fame
For Grecian heroes, where the present pow'r
Of heaven and earth surveys the immortal soul
Ev'n as a father's blessing, while he reads
The praises of his son.—If then thy page,
Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,
Mix in their deeds and kindle with their flame;
Say, when the prospect blackens on thy view,
When rooted from the base, heroic states
Mourn in the dust and tremble at the frown
Of curst ambition; when the pious band
Of youths, who fought for freedom and their sires,
Lie side by side in gore; when ruffian pride
Usurps the throne of justice, turns the pomp
Of public power, the majesty of rule,
The sword, the laurel, and the purple robe,
To slavish, empty pageants, to adorn
A tyrant's walk, and glitter in the eyes
Of such as bow the knee; when honour'd urns
Of patriots and of chiefs, the awful bust
And storied arch, to glut the coward rage
Of regal envy, strew the public way
With hallowed ruins; when the muse's haunt
The marble porch where wisdom wont to talk

With Socrates or Tully, hears no more,
Save the hoarse jargon of contentious monks,
Or female superstition's midnight prayer;
When ruthless rapine from the hand of time
Tears the destroying scythe, with surer blow
To sweep the works of glory from their base;
Till desolation o'er the grass grown street
Expands his raven wings, and up the wall,
Where senates once the price of monarchs doom'd,
Hisses the gliding snake thro' hoary weeds
That clasp the mould'ring column; thus defac'd,
Thus widely mournful when the prospect thrills
Thy beating bosom, when the patriot's tear
Starts from thine eye, and thy extended arm
In fancy hurls the thunder bolt of Jove
To fire the impious wreath, on Philip's brow,
Or dash Octavius from the trophied car!—
Say, does thy secret soul repine to taste
The big distress? Or would'st thou then exchange
Those heart ennobling sorrows, for the lot
Of him who sits amid the gaudy herd
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod,
And bears aloft his gold invested front,
And says within himself, "I am king.
"And wherefore should the clam'rous voice of woe
"Intrude upon mine ear?" The baleful dregs
Of these late ages, this inglorious draught
Of servitude and folly, have not yet,
Blest be the eternal ruler of the world!
Defil'd to such a depth of sordid shame
The native honors of the human soul,
Nor so effac'd the image of its sire.

ARGUMENT.

PLEASURE *in observing the tempers and manners of men, even where vicious or absurd. The origin of vice, from false representations of the fancy, producing false opinions concerning good and evil. Inquiry into ridicule. The general sources of ridicule, in the minds and characters of men, enumerated. Final cause of the sense of ridicule. The resemblance of inanimate things to the sensations and properties of the mind. The operations of the mind in the productions of the works of imagination, described. The secondary pleasure from imitation. The benevolent order of the world illustrated in the arbitrary connection of these pleasures with the objects which excite them. The nature and conduct of taste. Concluding with an account of the natural and moral advantages resulting from a sensible and well informed imagination.*

BOOK III.

WHAT wonder therefore, since the endearing ties
Of passion link the universal kind
Of man so close, what wonder if to search
This common nature through the various change
Of sex, and age, and fortune and the frame
Of each peculiar draw the busy mind
With unresisted charms? The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south
Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight
Of knowledge half so tempting or so fair,
As man to man. Nor only where the smiles
Of love invite; nor only where the applause
Of cordial honour turns the attentive eye
On virtue's graceful deeds. For since the course
Of things external acts in different ways
On human apprehensions, as the hand
Of nature temper'd to a different frame
Peculiar minds; so haply where the powers
Of fancy neither lessen nor enlarge
The images of things, but paint in all
Their genuine hues, the features which they wore
In nature; their opinion will be true,

And action right. For action treads the path
In which opinion says he follows good,
Or flies from evil; and opinion gives
Report of good or evil, as the scene
Was drawn by fancy, lovely or deformed.
Thus her report can never there be true,
Where fancy cheats the intellectual eye,
With glaring colours and distorted lines.
Is there a man, who at the sound of death,
Sees ghastly shapes of terror conjured up,
And black before him; nought but death-bed groans,
And fearful prayers, and plunging from the brink
Of light and being, down the gloomy air,
And unknown depth? Alas! in such a mind,
If no bright forms of excellence attend
The image of his country; nor the pomp
Of sacred senates, nor the guardian voice
Of justice on her throne, nor ought that wakes
The conscious bosom with a patriot's flame;
Will not opinion tell him, that to die,
Or stand the hazard, is a greater ill
Than to betray his country? And in act
Will not he chuse to be a wretch and live?
Here vice begins then. From the enchanting cup
Which fancy holds to all, the unwary thirst
Of youth oft swallows a Circæan draught,
That sheds a baleful tincture o'er the eye
Of reason, till no longer he discerns,
And only guides to err. Then revel forth
A furious band that spure him from the throne;
And all is uproar. Thus ambition grasps
The empire of the soul; thus pale revenge
Unsheath's her murd'rous dagger; and the hands
Of lust and rapine, with unholy arts,
Watch to o'erturn the barrier of the laws
That keeps them from their prey; thus all the plagues
The wicked bear, or o'er the trembling scene
The tragic muse discloses, under shapes
Of honour, safety, pleasure, ease or pomp,
Stole first into the mind. Yet not by all
Those lying forms which fancy in the brain
Engenders, are the kindling passions driven
To guilty deeds; nor reason bound in chains,
That vice alone may lord it; oft adorn'd
With solemn pageants, folly mounts his throne,
And plays her ideot antics, like a queen.

A thousand garbs she wares; a thousand ways
She wheels her giddy impire. Lo! thus far
With bold adventure, to the Mantuan lyre
I sing of nature's charms, and touch well pleas'd
A stricter note; now haply trust my song
Unbend her serious measure, and reveal
In lighter strains, how folly's awkard arts
Excite impetuous laughter's gay rebuke;
The sportive province of the comic muse.

See in what crowds the uncouth forms advance;
Each would outstrip the other, each prevent
Our careful search, and offer to your gaze,
Unask'd, his motely features. Wait awhile,
My curious friends! and let us first arrange
In proper orders your promiscuous throng.

Behold the foremost band; of slender thought,
And easy faith! whom flattering fancy sooths
With lying spectres, in themselves to view
Illustrious forms of excellence and good,
That scorn the mansion. With exulting hearts
They spread their spurious treasure to the sun;
And bid the world admire! but chief the glance
Of wishful envy draws their joy bright eyes,
And lifts with self-applause each lordly brow.
In number boundless as the bloom of spring,
Behold their glaring idols, empty shapes
By fancy gilded o'er, and then set up
For adoration. Some in learning's garb,
With formal band and sable cinctur'd gown
And rags of mouldy volumes. Some elate
With martial splendour, steely pikes and swords
Of costly frame, and gay Phoenician robes
Inwrought with flow'ry gold, assume the port
Of stately valour; list'ning by his side
There stands a female form; to her, with looks
Of earnest import, pregnant with amaze,
He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms,
And sulph'rous mines, and ambush; then at once
Breaks off, and smiles to see her look so pale,
And asks some wondering question of her fears,
Others of graver mein; behold, adorn'd
With holy ensigns, how sublime they move,
And bending oft their sanctimonious eyes,
Take homage of the simple minded throng;

Ambassadors of heaven! Nor much unlike
Is he whose visage, in the lazy mist
That mantle every feature, hides a brood
Of politic conceits; of whispers, nods,
And hint deep omen'd with unwieldy schemes,
And dark portents of state. Ten thousand more,
Prodigious habits and tumultuous tongues,
Pour dauntless in and swell the boastful band.

Then comes the second order; all who seek
The debt of praise, were watchful unbelief
Darts through the thin pretence her squinting eye
On some retir'd appearance which belies
The boasted virtue, or annuls the applause
That justice else would pay. Here side by side
I see two leaders of the solemn train,
Approaching; one a female, old and grey,
With eyes demure and wrinkled furrow'd brow,
Pale as the cheeks of death; yet still she stuns
The sick'ning audience with a nauseous tale
How many youths her myrte chains have worn,
How many virgins at her triumphs pin'd!
Yet how resolv'd she guards her cautious heart;
Such is her terror at the risques of love,
A man's seducing tongue! The other seems
A bearded sage, ungentle in his mien
And sordid all his habit; peevish want
Grins at his heels, while down the gazing throng
He stalks, resounding in magnific phrase
The vanity of riches, the contempt
Of pomp and power. Be prudent in your zeal,
Ye grave associates! let the silent grace
Of her who blushes at the fond regard
Her charms inspire, more eloquent unfold
The praise of spotless honor; let the man
Whose eye regards not his illustrious pomp
And ample store, but as indulgent streams
To chear the barren soil and spread the fruits
Of joy, let him by juster measure fix
The price of riches and the end of pow'r.

Another tribe succeeds; deluded long
By fancy's dazzling optics, these behold
The images of some peculiar things
With brighter hues resplendent, and portray'd
With features nobler far than e'er adorn'd

Their genuine objects. Hence the fever'd heart
Pants with delirious hope for tinsel charms;
Hence oft obtrusive on the eye of scorn,
Untimely zeal her witless pride betrays;
And serious manhood, from the tow'ring aim
Of wisdom, stoops to emulate the boast
Of childish toil. Behold yon mystic form,
Bedeck'd with feathers, insects, weeds, and shells!
Not with intenser view the Samian sage
Bent his fix'd eye on heaven's eternal fires,
When first the order of that radiant scene
Swell'd his exulting thought, than this surveys
A muckworm's entrails or a spider's fang.
Next him a youth, with flowers and myrtles crown'd,
Attends that virgin form, and blushing kneels,
With fondest gesture and a suppliant tongue,
To win her coy regard. Adieu, for him,
The dull engagements of the bustling world!
Adieu the sick impertinence of praise!
And hope and action! for with her alone,
By streams and shades, to steal the sighing hours,
Is all he asks, and all that fate can give!
Thee too, facetious Momion, wandering here,
Thee, dreaded censor! oft have I beheld
Bewildered unawares. Alas! too long,
Flush'd with thy comic triumphs and the spoils
Of sly derision! till on every side
Hurling thy random bolts, offended truth
Assign'd thee here thy station with the slaves
Of folly. Thy once formidable name
Shall grace her humbler records, and be heard
In scoffs and mockery bandied from the lips
Of all the vengeful brotherhood around,
So oft the patient victims of thy scorn.

But now, ye gay! to whom indulgent fate,
Of all the muses empire hath assign'd
The fields of folly, hither each advance
Your sickles; here the teeming soil affords
Its richest growth. A fav'rite brood appears;
In whom the demon, with a mother's joy,
Views all her charms reflected, all her cares
At full repaid. Ye most illustrious band!
Who, scorning reason's tame, pedantic rules,
And orders vulgar bondage, never meant
For souls sublime as yours, with generous zeal

Pay vice the reverence virtue long usurp'd,
And yield deformity the fond applause
Which beauty wont to claim ; forgive my song,
That for the blushing diffidence of youth,
It shuns the unequal province of your praise.

Thus far triumphant in the pleasing guile
Of bland imagination, folly's train
Have dar'd our search ; but now a dastard kind
Advance reluctant, and with faltering feet,
Shrink from the gazer's eye ; enfeebled hearts
Whom fancy chills with visionary fears,
Or bends to servile tameness with conceits
Of shame, of evil, or of base defect,
Fantastic and delusive. Here the slave
Who droops abash'd when sullen pomp surveys
His humbler habit ; here the trembling wretch
Unnerv'd and struck with terror's icy bolts,
Spent in weak wailings, drown'd in shameful tears,
At every dream of danger ; here subdued
By frontless laughter and the hardy scorn
Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject soul
Who blushing half resigns the candid praise
Of temperance and honour ; half disowns
A freeman's hatred of tyrannic pride ;
And hears with sickly smiles the venal mouth
With foulest licence mock the patriot's name.

Last of the motley bands on whom the power
Of gay derision bends her hostile aim,
Is that where shameful ignorance presides.
Beneath her sordid banners, lo ! they march,
Like blind and lame. Whate'er their doubtful hands
Attempt, confusion straight appears behind,
And troubles all the work. Through many a maze
Perplex'd they struggle, changing every path,
O'erturning every purpose ; then at last
Sit down dismay'd, and leave the entangled scene
For scorn to sport with. Such then is the abode
Of folly in the mind ; and such the shapes
In which she governs her obsequious train.
Through every scene of ridicule in things
To lead the tenour of my devious lay ;
Through every swift occasion which the hand
Of laughter points at, when the mirthful string
Distends her sallying nerves and chokes her tongue ;

What were it but to count each crystal drop
Which morning's dewy fingers on the blooms
Of May distil? Suffice it to have said,
Where'er the power of ridicule displays
Her quaint-ey'd visage, some incongruous form,
Some stubborn dissonance of things combin'd,
Strikes on the quick observer; whether promp,
Or praise, or beauty, mix their partial claim
Where sordid fashions, where ignoble deeds,
Where foul deformity are wont to dwell;
Or whether these with violation loath'd
Invade resplendent pomp's imperious mien,
The charms of beauty, or the boast of praise.

Ask we for what fair end the almighty sire
In mortal bosoms wakes this gay contempt,
The grateful stings of laughter, from disgust
Educing pleasure? Wherefore, but to aid
The tardy steps of reason, and at once
By this prompt impulse urge us to depress
The giddy aims of folly? Though the light
Of truth slow dawning on the enquiring mind,
At length unfolds, through many a subtle tie,
How these uncouth disorders end at last
In public evil; yet benignant heaven,
Conscious how dim the dawn of truth appears
To thousands; conscious what a scanty pause
From labours and from care, the wider lot
Of humble life affords for studious thought
To scan the maze of nature; therefore stampt
The glaring scenes with characters of scorn,
As broad, as obvious, to the passing clown,
As to the letter'd sage's curious eye.

Such are the various aspects of the mind——
Some heavenly genius, whose unclouded thoughts
Attain that secret harmony which blends
The ethereal spirit with its mould of clay;
O! teach me to reveal the grateful charm
That searchless nature o'er the sense of man
Diffuses, to behold, in lifeless things,
The inexpressive semblance of himself,
Of thought and passion. Mark the sable woods
That shade sublime yon mountain's nodding brow;
With what religious awe the solemn scene
Commands your steps! as if the reverend form

Of Minos or of Numa should forsake
Th' Elysian seats, and down the embowering glade
Move to your pausing eye! Behold th' expanse
Of yon gay landscape, where the silver clouds
Flit o'er the heavers before the sprightly breeze;
Now their gay cincture skirts the doubtful sun:
Now streams of splendour, thro' their opening veil
Effulgent, sweep from off the gilded lawn
The aerial shadows; on the curling brook,
And on the shady margin's quivering leaves
With quickest lustre glancing; while you view
The prospect, say, within your cheerful breast
Plays not the lively sense of winning mirth
With clouds and sunshine chequered, while the round
Of social converse, to the inspiring tongue
Of some gay nymph amid her subject train,
Moves all obsequious? Whence is this effect,
This kindred power of such discordant things?
Or flows that semblance from the mystic tone
To which the new born mind's harmonious powers
At first were strung? Or rather from the links
Which artful custom twines around her frame?

For when the diff'rent images of things
By chance combin'd, have struck the attentive soul
With deeper impulse, or, connected long,
Have drawn her frequent eye; howe'er distinct
The external scenes, yet oft the ideas gain
From that conjunction an eternal tie,
And sympathy unbroken. Let the mind
Recall one partner of the various league,
Immediate, lo! the firm confederates rise,
And each his former station straight resumes;
One movement governs the consenting throng,
And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,
Or all are sadden'd with the glooms of care.
'Twas thus, if ancient fame the truth unfold,
Two faithful needles, from the informing touch
Of the same parent stone, together drew
Its mystic virtue, and at first conspir'd
With fatal impulse quivering to the pole.
Then, though disjoin'd by kingdoms, through the main
Roll'd its broad surge betwixt, and diff'rent stars
Beheld their wakeful motions, yet preserv'd
The former friendship, and remember'd still
The alliance of their birth: whate'er the line

Which one possess'd, nor pause, nor quiet knew
The sure associate, ere with trembling speed
He found its path and fix'd unerring there.
Such is the secret union, when we feel
A song, a flower, a name, at once restore
Those long-connected scenes, where first they mov'd
The attention; backward through her mazy walks
Guiding the wanton fancy to her scope,
To temples, courts, or fields; with all the bands
Of painted forms, of passions and designs
Attendant; Whence, if pleasing in itself,
The prospect from the sweet accessions gains
Redoubled influence o'er the listening mind.

By these mysterious ties the busy power
Of memory her ideal train preserves
Intire; or when they would elude her watch,
Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste
Of dark oblivion; thus collecting all
The various forms of being to present,
Before the curious aim of mimic art,
Their largest choice; like spring's unfolded blooms
Exhaling sweetness, that the skilful bee
May taste at will, from their selected spoils
To work her dulcet food. For not the expanse
Of living lakes, in summer's noontide calm,
Reflects the bordering shade and sun bright heavens
With fairer semblance; not the sculptur'd gold
More faithful keeps the graver's lively trace,
Than he whose birth the sister powers of art
Propitious view'd, and from his genial star
Shed influence to the seeds of fancy kind;
Than his attemper'd bosom must preserve
The seal of nature. There alone unchang'd
Her form remains. The balmy walks of May
There breathe perennial sweets; the trembling chord
Resounds forever in the abstracted ear
Melodious; and the virgin's radiant eye,
Superior to disease, to grief, and time,
Shines with unbating lustre. Thus at length
Endow'd with all that nature can bestow,
The child of fancy oft in silence bends
O'er these mix'd treasures of his pregnant breast,
With conscious pride. From them he oft resolves
To frame he knows not what excelling things;
And win he knows not what sublime reward

Of praise and wonder. By degrees the mind
Feels her young nerves dilate; the plastic powers
Labour for action; blind emotions heave
His bosom; and with loveliest phrenzy caught,
From earth to heaven he rolls his daring eye,
From heaven to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes,
Like spectres trooping to the wizard's call,
Flit swift before him. From the womb of earth,
From ocean's bed they come; the eternal heavens
Disclose their splendours, and the dark abyss
Pours out her births unknown. With fixed gaze
He marks the rising phantoms. Now compares
Their different forms; now blends them, now divides,
Enlarges and extenuates by turns;
Opposes, ranges in fantastic bands,
And infinitely varies. Hither now,
Now thither fluctuates his inconstant aim
With endless choice perplex'd. At length his plan
Begins to open. Lucid order dawns;
And as from Chaos old the jarring seeds
Of nature at the voice divine repair'd
Each to its place, till rosy earth unveil'd
Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful sun
Sprung up the blue serene; by swift degrees
Thus disentangled, his entire design
Emerges, colours mingle, features join,
And lines converge; the fainter parts retire;
The fairer, eminent in light, advance;
And every image on its neighbour smiles.
Awhile he stands, and with a father's joy
Contemplates. Then, with Promethean art,
Into its proper vehicle he breathes
The fair conception; which embodied thus,
And permanent, becomes to eyes or ears
An object ascertain'd; while thus inform'd,
The various organs of his mimic skill,
The consonance of sounds, the featur'd rock,
The shadowy picture and impassioned verse,
Beyond their proper powers attract the soul
By that expressive semblance, while in sight
Of nature's great original we scan
The lively child of art; while line by line,
And feature after feature we refer
To that sublime exemplar whence it stole
Those animating charms. Thus beauty's palm
Betwixt them wavering hangs: applauding love

Doubts where to choose ; and mortal man aspires
To tempt creative praise. As when a cloud
Of gathering hail with limpid crusts of ice
Inclos'd and obvious to the beaming sun,
Collects his large effulgence ; strait the heav'ns
With equal flames present on either hand
The radiant visage : Persia stands at gaze,
Appall'd ; and on the brink of Ganges doubts
The snowy vested seer, in Mirtha's name,
To which the fragrance of the south shall burn,
To which his warbled orisons ascend.

Such various bliss the well tun'd heart enjoys,
Favour'd of heaven ! While, plung'd in sordid cares,
The unfeeling vulgar mocks the boon divine ;
And harsh austerity, from whose rebuke
Young love and smiling wonder shrink away,
Abash'd and chill of heart, with sager frowns
Condemns the fair enchantment. On my strain,
Perhaps ev'n now some cold, fastidious judge
Casts a disdainful eye ; and calls my toils
And calls the love and beauty which I sing,
The dream of folly. Thou, grave censor ! say,
Is beauty then a dream, because the glooms
Of dullness hang too heavy on thy sense
To let her shine upon thee ? So the man
Whose eye ne'er opened to the light of heaven,
Might smile with scorn while raptur'd vision tells
Of the gay colour'd radiance flushing bright
O'er all creation. From the wise be far
Such gross unhallow'd pride ; nor needs my song
Descend so low ; but rather now unfold,
If human thought could reach, or words unfold,
By what mysterious fabric of the mind,
The deep-felt joys and harmony of sound
Result from airy motion ; and from shape
The lovely phantom of sublime and fair.
By what fine ties hath Good connected things
When present in the mind, which in themselves
Have no connexion ? Sure the rising sun
O'er the cerulean convex of the sea,
With equal brightness and with equal warmth
Might roll his fiery orb ; nor yet the soul
Thus feel her frame expanded, and her powers
Exulting in the splendour she beholds ;
Like a young conqueror moving thro' the pomp

Of some triumphal day. When, join'd at eve,
Soft murmuring streams and gales of gentlest breath
Melodious Philomela's wakeful strain
Attemper, could not man's discerning ear
Thro' all its tones the symphony pursue,
Nor yet this breath divine of nameless joy
Steal through his veins and fan the awakened heart,
Mild as the breeze, yet rapturous as the song?

But were not nature still endow'd at large
With all which life requires, though unador'd
With such enchantment? wherefore then her form
So exquisitely fair? her breath perfum'd
With such ethereal sweetness? Whence her voice
Inform'd at will to raise or to depress
The impassion'd soul? and whence the robes of light
Which thus invest her with more lovely pomp
Than fancy can describe? Whence but from thee,
O source divine of ever flowing love,
And thy unmeasur'd goodness? Not content
With every food of life to nourish man,
By kind illusions of the wondering sense
Thou mak'st all nature beauty to his eye,
Or music to his ear: well pleas'd he scans
The goodly prospect; and with inward smiles
Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain;
Beholds the azure canopy of heaven,
And living lamps that over-arch his head
With more than regal splendour; bends his ears
To the full choir of water, air, and earth;
Nor heeds the pleasing error of his thought,
Nor doubts the painted green or azure arch,
Nor questions more the music's mingling sounds
Than space, or motion, or eternal time;
So sweet he feels their influence to attract
The fixed soul; to brighten the dull glooms
Of care, and make the destin'd road of life
Delightful to his feet. So fables tell.
The adventerous hero, bound on hard exploits,
Beholds with glad surprize, by secret spells
Of some kind sage, the patron of his toils,
A visionary paradise disclosed
Amid the dubious wild; with streams and shades,
And airy songs, the enchanted landscape smiles,
Cheers his long labours and renews his frame.

What then is taste, but these internal pow'rs
Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of descent and sublime, with quick disgust,
From things deformed, or disarrang'd, or gross
In species? This, nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow;
But God alone, when first his active hand
Imprints the secret bias of the soul.
He, mighty Parent! wise and just in all,
Free as the vital breeze or light of heav'n,
Reveals the charms of nature. Ask the swain
Who journeys homeward from a summer day's
Long labour, why, forgetful of his toils
And due repose, he loiters to behold
The sunshine gleaming as thro' amber clouds,
O'er all the western sky; full soon, I ween,
His rude expression and untutored airs,
Beyond the power of language, will unfold
The form of beauty smiling at his heart,
How lovely! how commanding! But though heaven
In every breast hath sown these early seeds
Of love and admiration, yet in vain,
Without fair culture's kind parental aid
Without enlivening suns, and genial showers
And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope
The tender plant should rear its blooming head,
Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring.
Nor yet will every soil with equal stores
Repay the tiller's labour; or attend
His will obsequious, whether to produce
The olive or the laurel. Different minds
Incline to different objects; one pursues
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;
Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires,
The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground,
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed
Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;
Amid the mighty uproar, while below
The nations tremble, Shakespear looks abroad
From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
The elemental war. But Waller longs,
All on the margin of some flowery stream,
To spread his careless limbs amid the cool

Of plantane shades, and to the listening deer,
The tale of slighted vows and love's disdain
Resound soft warbling all the live-long day:
Consenting Zephyr sighs; the weeping rill
Joins in his plaint, melodious; mute the groves;
And hill and dale with all their echoes mourn.
Such and so various are the tastes of men.

Oh! blest of heav'n, whom not the languid songs
Of luxury, the Siren! not the bribes
Of sordid wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils
Of pageant honour, can seduce to leave
Those ever blooming sweets, which from the store
Of nature fair imagination culls
To charm the enliven'd soul! What though not all
Of mortal offspring can attain the heights
Of envied life; though only few possess
Patrician treasures or imperial state;
Yet nature's care, to all her children just,
With richer treasures and an ampler state
Endows at large whatever happy man
Will deign to use them. His the city's pomp,
The rural honours his. Whate'er adorns
The princely dome, the column and the arch;
The breathing marbles and the sculptur'd gold,
Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
His tuneful breast enjoys. For him, the spring
Distils her dews, and from the silken gem
Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him, the hand
Of autumn tinges every fertile branch
With blooming gold and blushes like the morn.
Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings;
And still new beauties meet his lonely walk;
And loves unfelt attract him. Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadows, not a cloud imbibes
The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasure, unreprov'd. Nor thence partakes
Fresh pleasure only; for the attentive mind,
By this harmonious action on her pow'rs,
Becomes herself harmonious; wont so oft
In outward things to meditate the charm
Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
To find a kindred order, to exert
Within herself this elegance of love,

This fair inspir'd delight: her temper'd pow'rs
Refine at length, and every passion wears
A chaster, milder, more attractive mien.
But if to ampler prospects, if to gaze
On nature's form, where, negligent of all
These lesser graces, she assumes the port
Of that eternal Majesty that weigh'd
The world's foundations, if to these the mind
Exalt her daring eye; then mightier far
Will be the change, and nobler. Would the forms
Of servile custom cramp her generous pow'rs?
Would sordid policies, the barbarous growth
Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down
To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear!
Lo! she appeals to nature, to the winds
And rolling waves, the sun's unwearied course,
The elements and seasons: all declare
For what th' eternal Maker has ordain'd
The pow'rs of man: we feel within ourselves
His energy divine; he tells the heart;
He meant, he made us to behold and love
What he beholds and loves, the general orb
Of life and being; to be great like him,
Beneficent and active. Thus the men
Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day
With his conceptions; act upon his plan;
And form to his, the relish of their souls.

THE

TASK,

A POEM

IN SIX BOOKS.

BY WILLIAM COWPER,
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

With England's bard, with *Cowper*, who shall vie?
Original in strength and dignity;
With more than painter's fancy blest, with lays
Holy, as saints, to heaven, expiring raise.
Pursuits of Literature, dial. 4. *prop. fn.*

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa.—A School-boy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The scene described.—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful.—Another walk.—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove, and the view from it.—The wilderness.—The grove.—The thresher.—The necessity and the benefits of exercise.—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art.—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure.—Change of scene sometimes expedient.—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced.—Gipsies.—The blessings of civilized life.—That state most favourable to virtue.—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai.—His present state of mind supposed.—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured.—Fete champetre.—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

The Task.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

I SING the Sofa. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escap'd with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
Th' occasion—for the fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravely bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, repos'd his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birth-day of invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborn they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms:
And such, in ancient halls and mansions drear,
May still be seen; but perforated sore,

And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refin'd
Improv'd the simple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,
Induc'd a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tap'stry richly wrought
And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish; sever'd into stripes
That interlac'd each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that brac'd
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had plac'd
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fixt;
If cushion might be call'd what harder seem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The umber stood
Ponderous and fixt by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
An alderman of Cripplegate contriv'd;
And some ascribe th' invention to a priest
Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
But, rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
And bruis'd the side; and, elevated high,
Taught the rais'd shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elaps'd or e'er our rugged sires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,

And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious fancy, never better pleas'd
Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devis'd
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midst an elbow it receiv'd,
United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens who take the air,
Close pack'd, and smiling in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame,
By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
Was bliss reserv'd for happier days. So slow
The growth of what is excellent; so hard
To attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
And luxury the accomplish'd SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hir'd to watch the sick,
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoy'd by curate in his desk,
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
Compar'd with the repose the SOFA yields.

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropt by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,

E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket-store consum'd,
Still hung'ring, penniless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries that imboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not; nor the palate, undeprav'd
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return;
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and, though our years
As life declines speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that sooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of pow'r to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft, upon yon eminence, our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have born
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd

The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His lab'ring team, that swerv'd not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying, on its varied side, the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which, daily view'd,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate, employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The live-long night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,

The jay, the pye, and even the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devis'd the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
More delicate, his timorous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, oozy laden, brings his beverage home,
Far fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad, and his last crust consum'd.
So farewel envy of the *peasant's nest*!
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,

Be still a pleasing object in my view;
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns; and, in their shaded walks
And long-protracted bowers, enjoy'd at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-depriv'd
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to * Benevolus—he spares me yet
These chesnuts rang'd in corresponding lines;
And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
We pass a gulph, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence, ancle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth; and, plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few
From transient years, won from the abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
And, posted on this speculative height,
Exults in its command. The sheep-fold here

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Underwood.

Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but, scatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There, from the sun-burnt hay-field, homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by;
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its top-most boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some
And of a wannish gray; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leav'd, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
Have chang'd the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interpos'd between),
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little naiad her impoverish'd urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now,
But that the * lord of this inclos'd demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.

* See the foregoing note.

Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems? while beneath
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-brac'd and spirits cheer'd,
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff.
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
And sleep not: see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceasless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleans'd
By restless undulation: even the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:

He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns—
More fixed below, the more disturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.
Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And their's alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its associate in most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are their's;
Even age itself seems privileg'd in them,
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The veteran shows, and, gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.
The love of nature and the scenes she draws,
Is nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found,
Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who, satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires—the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,

Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renew'd;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue;
His eye relumines its extinguished fires;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it who has long endur'd
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire:
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
And mar, the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears;
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,

No smartness in the jest; and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort,
Her mingled suits and sequences; and sits,
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet even these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed;
And save me too from their's whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleas'd with novelty, might be indulg'd.
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.

Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce awhile,
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.
A serving maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy, too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never smil'd again! And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as the cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heav'd with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier cloth,
Tho' pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is craz'd!

I see a column of slow rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermine, or, at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shews a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft,
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers; and, with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And, breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguished from the croud
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness; having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
Is obvious, plac'd within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives, as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,

And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she springs spontaneous) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tam'd, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.
War and the chase engross the savage whole;
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot:
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the antarctic. Even the favour'd isles,
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and, inert,
Through plenty, lose in morals, what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
These, therefore, I can pity, plac'd remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
By navigators uninformed as they;
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again:
But, far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle* savage! whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity, perhaps,
Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers to shew thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past; and thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And, having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,

* Omai.

Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with our's?
Rude as thou art, (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
She tells me, too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepar'd
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be brib'd, to compass earth again,
By other hopes, and richer fruits, than your's.

But, though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there;
Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the atchievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world;
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chissel occupy alone
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and cloathes a soil
So sterile with what charms so'er she will,
The richest scenery and the lovliest forms.
Where finds philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London: where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans,
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied,
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
To avenge, than to prevent, the breach of law;
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
To peculators of the public gold;

That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts
Into his overgorg'd and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor it is well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presum'd to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And centering all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocs are well-nigh divorc'd.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound,
And least be threaten'd, in the fields and groves?
Possess ye, therefore, ye, who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only can ye shine;
There only minds like your's can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moon-beam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish;
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps; they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
Scar'd, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as your's,
Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, stedfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow.—Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamitses by sin.—God the agent in them.—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved.—Our own late miscarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fountainbleau.—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit-maitre parson.—The good preacher.—Pictures of a theatrical clerical coxcomb. Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved.—Apostrophe to popular applause.—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The mischiefs of profusion.—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless continuity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd, as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own; and, having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplor'd,
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.

Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that, where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations, in a world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom*. When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors† from above,
Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature § with a dim and sickly eye,
To wait the close of all! But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands

* Alluding to the calamities at Jamaica.
† August 18, 1783.
§ Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
And stand expos'd by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause;
While God performs, upon the trembling stage
Of his own works, his dreadful part, alone.
How does the earth receive him?—With what signs
Of gratulation and delight, her king?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps,
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his feet.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touch'd them. From the extremest point
Of elevation, down into the abyss
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the vallies rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fixt and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or, with vortiginous and hideous whirl,
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted; and, with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought

To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridg'd so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who, then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret,
That even a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems, in their eyes, a mercy, for thy sake.

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And, in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or, if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And, needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulphs.
What then!—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
Mov'd not, while their's was rock'd, like a light skiff,
The sport of ev'ry wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:

May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,
Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns (since from the least
The greatest oft originate); could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;
Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth philosophy, though eagle-ey'd
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found his instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men,
That live an atheist life: involves the heaven
In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shriveled lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work,
By necessary laws, their sure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means

Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve; ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
To shake thy senate, and, from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence, to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task:
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies, too; and, with a just disdain,
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenc'd o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praise enough
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell, with them,
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen,
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe, upon the lap
Of smiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
Consulting England's happiness at home,

Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.
Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility! Breathe soft,
Ye clarionets; and softer still, ye flutes;
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore!
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.
True we may thank the perfidy of France,
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state!
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And, sham'd as we have been, to the very beard,
Brav'd and defied, and in our own sea prov'd
Too weak for those decisive blows that once
Ensur'd us mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own!
Go, then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame ye might conceal at home
In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd:
And, under such preceptors, who can fail!

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform,
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
To arrest the fleeting images that fill

The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit till he has pencil'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;
Then to dispose his copies with such art,
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost ;
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man !
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah ! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
There least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all ? studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay ?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch ;
But where are its sublimer trophies found ?
What vice has it subdu'd ? whose heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform ?
Alas ! Leviathan is not so tam'd :
Laughed at, he laughs again ; and, stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
Spent all his force and made no proselyte)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,

Support, and ornament, of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect!
Are all such teachers?—would to heav'n all were!
But hark! the doctor's voice!—fast wedg'd between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and their's!
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zig-zag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?
Oh, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church!

I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But, loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;

Frequent in park with lady at his side,
Ambling and pratling scandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyships—a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of the world,
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride:—
From such apostles, oh, ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On sculls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and, reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!

In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,

And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practised at the glass!
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the prest nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves;
And, having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye—
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke
An eye-brow; next, compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air most gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand, more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera glass, to watch the moving scene,
And recognize the slow-retiring fair—
Now this is fulsome; and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. An heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so phantastic, trim,
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negociates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address

The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

Oh, popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But, swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the shrivel'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty; and in the bow
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer;
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more,
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as adoration breathes?
Ah, spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defil'd
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain to filtre off a crystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
The thirst than slak'd it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world; ask'd, Whence is man?
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?

Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A deity could solve. Their answers, vague,
And all at random, fabulous, and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unsanction'd, prov'd too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates, the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtur'd in the shades
Of Academus—is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store?
How oft, when Paul has serv'd us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd!
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too!

And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
Perverting often, by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct;
Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly council; if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof

Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonour'd, in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage;
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are mov'd, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapt,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

As nations ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
Some fifty or an hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like our's,
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There, closely brac'd
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure
A form not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
But, thus admonish'd, we can walk erect
One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant,
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date;
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd;

And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change that fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
And, studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little us'd,
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires;
And introduces hunger, frost, and wo,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough,
With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
To insure a side-box station at half price.
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is folly's circle, which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by heaven's peculiar grace, escape;
There we grow early gray, but never wise;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse.
There they are happiest who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite,
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She, that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)
Make just reprisals; and, with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,

To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlacquey'd; who, in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance—fortune, most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven.—
So fare we in this prison-house, the world.
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast,
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!

Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use:
Makes men mere vermine, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band,
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps, the consciences of public men,
Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools
That trust them; and, in the end, disclose a face
That would have shock'd credulity herself,

Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?
This does profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenious worth,
That blush'd at its own praise; and press the youth
Close to his side that pleas'd him. Learning grew
Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanc'd, as sometimes chance it must,
That one, among so many, overleap'd
The limits of controul, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and clos'd the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declin'd at length into the vale of years:
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unstrung,
Grew tremulous, and mov'd derision more
Than reverence in perverse rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend; and Discipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then study languish'd, emulation slept,
And virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance, in stilts,
His cap well lin'd with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.

Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
Became stone-blind; precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued;
The curbs, invented for the mulish mouth
Of head-strong youth, were broken; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse; and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
'Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
The tassell'd cap, and the spruce band, a jest,
A mockery of the world! What need of these
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist, and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd, in childhood, is forgot;
And such expence as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports,
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And cleaves, through life, inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition, thus acquir'd
Where science and where virtue are profess'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly; but to spoil him is a task
That bids defiance to the united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now, blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?
The children, crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,
Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye,
And slumbering oscitancy, mars the brood?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
She needs herself correction; needs to learn
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.

He grac'd a college *, in which order yet
Was sacred; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept,
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt
With such ingredients of good sense, and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more,
Than they themselves, by choice, for wisdom's sake;
Nor can example hurt them. What they see
Of vice in others, but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure, from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Expos'd their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See, then, the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
What wonder if, discharg'd into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine!
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war,
With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley, with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns—
Mourns, because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that policy has rais'd,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn.
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found, too, where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the rob'd pedagogue! Else, let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So, when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,
And wav'd his rod divine, a race obscene,

* Bennet Coll. Cambridge.

Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains,
Were cover'd with the pest; the streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scap'd;
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Pruning.—Framing.—Greenhouse.—Sowing of flower-seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in the winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season.—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;
If chance at length he find a green-sward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise;
He chirrups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame (howe'er deserv'd),
Long held, and scarcely disengag'd at last.
But now, with pleasant pace, a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,

Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains;
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
There, undisturb'd by folly, and appriz'd
How great the danger of disturbing her,
To muse in silence, or at least confine
Remarks that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect,
Or temper, sheds into thy crystal cup.
Thou art the nurse of virtue—in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destin'd to the skies again.
Thou art not known where pleasure is ador'd,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding, in the calm of truth-tied love,
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!
Till prostitution elbows us aside
In all our crowded streets; and senates seem
Conven'd for purposes of empire less
Than to release the adultress from her bond.
The adultress! what a theme for angry verse!
What provocation to the indignant heart
That feels for injur'd love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame!
No;—let her pass, and, charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now, of character unsmirch'd,

And chaste themselves, are not asham'd to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,
Not to be pass'd: and she, that had renounc'd
Her sex's honour, was renounc'd herself
By all that priz'd it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not receiv'd;
But was an wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men, too, were nice in honour in those days,
And judg'd offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,
And pocketted a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she requir'd
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid, with the blood that he had basely spar'd,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now,
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In Christian charity, (good-natur'd age!)
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through every door.
Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
May claim this merit still—that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixt
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those

My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motly wings in the eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known; and call the rant
An history: describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note;
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp,

In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is 't not a pity, now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That, having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they,
But frantic, who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles, proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a power who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning that has liv'd in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it, in the infallible result,
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceiv'd.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amus'd.
Defend me, therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?—
Much I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity, from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
And catechise it well; apply thy glass,
Search it, and prove, now, if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?

True ; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like your's. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath ;
I cannot analyze the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss ;
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage
Or headless folly, by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In his works
Though wonderous, he commands us in his word
To seek *him* rather, where his mercy shines.
The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect ; acknowledges, with joy,
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
But never yet did philosophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover him that rules them ; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often, too,
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her author more ;
From instrumental causes, proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
But, if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptiz'd
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed ; and, viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has born such fruit in other days
On all her branches : piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage !
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,

Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna! And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment prais'd,
And sound integrity, not more than tam'd
For sanctity of manners undefil'd.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flower dishevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream:
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him, ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth? 'twas Pilate's question, put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it; though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is't that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up;
But which the poor, and the despis'd of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O, friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets;
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in paradise, (for earth has still

Some traces of her youthful beauty left)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsmen over hill and dale,
Fearless, and wrapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek,
For their own sake, its silence and its shade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultur'd and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain;
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endu'd
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears, alas, and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!
Well—one at least is safe. One sheltered hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar; she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou mayst frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure

To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd;
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledg'd
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, sighing, say,
I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who justly, in return,
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim
Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation who has these?
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?
Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful; happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it; and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account
From whom are all our blessings; business finds
Even here: while sedulous I seek to improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By causes not to be divulg'd in vain,
To its just point—the service of mankind.
He that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart, and keeps it; has a mind
That hungers, and supplies it; and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engag'd to achieve
No unimportant, though a silent, task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem,
To him that leads it, wise, and to be prais'd;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend

His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book,
Well chosen, and not sullenly perus'd
In selfish silence, but imparted oft
As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment, digested well:
Or, if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying its unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only, or direct,
But much performs himself. No works indeed
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ; but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet (no barren interval between)
With pleasure more than even their fruits afford,
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel:
These, therefore, are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at the expence of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measur'd distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,
And hence even winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty, not his own*.
Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd,
And wise precaution; which a clime so rude
Makes needful still, whose spring is but the child
Of churlish winter, in her froward moods

* Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma. VIRG.

Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
Maternal nature had revers'd its course,
She brings her infants forth with many smiles;
But, once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
He, therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matur'd,
And at this moment unassay'd in song.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
The solitary shilling. Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
The ambition of one, meaner far, whose powers,
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast:
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Expos'd to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favour'd spot; that, where he builds
The agglomerated pile, his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose,

And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest, forms secure
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth.
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves:
The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear, translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane, the deluge as it falls.
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffus'd, attain the surface: when, behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Boeotian, rising fast,
And fast condens'd upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtain'd, the over-charg'd
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank;
And purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervour which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd
And fruitful soil, that has been treasur'd long,
And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds:
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The smoking manure and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immers'd.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first
Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,

If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulg'd in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
These have their sexes; and, when summer shines,
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flower to flower, and even the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art
Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half
Lives by contriving delicates for you)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,
That day and night are exercis'd, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind, and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,
Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust;
And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produc'd.

Who loves a garden loves, a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,

There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle, with unwithering leaf,
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries, hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraia: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if conven'd
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r,
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular, yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retir'd, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were rang'd the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakespeare's beauty, seen
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taste alone, and well-contriv'd display,
Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious; cares on which depend,
Their vigour, injur'd soon, not soon restor'd.
The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd,
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase,
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch

Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleas'd,
The scent regal'd, each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
It's gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
That, softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well-match'd
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home;
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it all is Gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth: with suns and moons
Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd the encumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He, therefore, who would see his flowers dispos'd
Sightly, and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole; that, when the scene
Shall break into its preconceiv'd display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjur'd, but expect the upholding aid

Of the smooth-shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffus'd
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen:
Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow, with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

Oh, blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil; proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious custom, raging uncontroul'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce temptation, seconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd with hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the the guiltless joys that I describe,
Allur'd by my report: but sure no less,
That, self condemn'd they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and, when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that, its worth

Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
Vain glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men—universal prize.
Strange, that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destin'd to divide,
With meaner objects, even the few she finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines,
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
That Metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long;
And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now,
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
Who had surviv'd the father, serv'd the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord

Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd,
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gaz'd upon a while,
Then advertis d, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharg'd
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight
Grow on the gamester's elbows ; and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes !
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears !
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers—a grave whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot ; where, more expos'd,
It may enjoy the advantage of the north,
And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn ;
Woods vanish, hills subside, and vallies rise ;
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—
Even as he bids ! The enraptur'd owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd, and yet, finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could shew,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labour'd, and many a night pursu'd in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy !
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
When, having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace

Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote,
Well-managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.
Oh innocent, compar'd with arts like these,
Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,
So he may wrap himself in honest rags,
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid, and sickening at his own success.

Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
As duly as the swallows disappear,
The world of wandering knights and squires to town.
London ingulphs them all! The shark is there,
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift, and the leech
That sucks him. There the sycophant, and he
Who, with bare-headed and obsequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown,
The levee swarms, as if, in golden pomp,
Were character'd on every statesman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean, hard-handed poverty, inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amus'd,
That, at the sound of winter's hoary wing,
Unpeople all our counties of such herds
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

Oh thou resort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more than I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,

That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abr'am plead in vain.

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The post comes in.—The news-paper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance.—Address to Winter.—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter: what she was—what she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! o'er yonder bridge,
That, with its wearisome but needful length,
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn;
And, having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charg'd with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs reponsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh the important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of the atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
And jewel'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,

The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast.
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who, with shining face,
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage:
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the summit, see!
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down.
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft
Meanders, lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is asham'd and griev'd
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise;
The dearth of information and good sense
That it foretells us always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost;

While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,
Æthereal journies, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls, a soft murmur, on the uninjur'd ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying, thus at ease,
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanc'd,
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns, submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy, of all,
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research,
At his return—a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

Oh Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair, with sleet-like ashes, fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group,
The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
Not less dispers'd by day-light and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powder'd, pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch, from many a trembling chord, shakes out;
And the clear voice, symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still;
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel

Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds,
The volume clos d, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A roman meal;
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd—spare feast!—a radish and an egg!
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as, with a frown, forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scap'd, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook d for, life preserv d and peace restor'd—
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh, evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The sabine bard. Oh, evenings, I reply,
More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,
As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To thaw him into feeling; or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a side-long glance at a full house)
The slope of faces, from the floor to the roof,
(As if one master-spring controul'd them all)
Relax'd into an universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks a joy
Half so refin'd or so sincere as our's.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contriv'd
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.

Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoil'd, and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's time is time in masquerade!
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd
With motley plumes; and, where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguin d hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was, an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box; and a billiard mast
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleas'd when idle most;
Whose only happy, are their wasted, hours.
Even misses, at whose age their mother's wore
The back-string and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and, night by night,
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far oft turns aside
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen, delights him not; then, coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
With colours mix'd for a far different use,
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow-moving, while the night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
Like homely featured night, of clustering gems;
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than her's, not worn indeed on high

With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to please;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliah, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole, without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures, too, begin. But me, perhaps,
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight: such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful, or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indispos'd alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amus'd, have I, quiescent, watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous, and foreboding,—in the view
Of superstition, prophecying still,
Though still deceiv'd,—some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man

Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers; and, snapping short
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I saw the woods and fields, at close of day,
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately wav'd
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce notic'd in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives,
Gladly, the thickening mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world so thorny, and where none
Finds happpiness unblighted; or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and, in its sluggish pace,

Noiseless, appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy; and, in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never needs explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the great,
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat;
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad, and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well;
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inur'd than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly mov'd by his severer toil;
Yet he, too, finds his own distress in their's.

The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end,
Just when the day declin'd, and the brown loaf
Lodg'd on the shelf, half-eaten, without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter, costlier still;
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas,
Where penury is felt, the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have none
To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
No comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliants, who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse;
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
These ask with painful shyness, and refus'd
Because deserving, silently retire!
But be ye of good courage! Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase;
And all your numerous progeny, well train'd,
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty, with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.

Woe to the gardner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plash'd neatly, and secur'd with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil—
An ass's burden—and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot, steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well secur'd,
Where chanticleer, amidst his haram, sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.—
Nor this to feed his own! 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute.—But they
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Expos'd than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood
He gave them, in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love!

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the styes
That law has licens'd, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involv'd and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom: the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard:

Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand,
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;
And smiles, delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
The cheek-distending oath; not to be prais'd
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame!
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts,
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill!—'tis here they learn
The road that leads, from competence and peace,
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain the attempt
To advertise, in verse, a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad, then; 'ts your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;—
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days
That poets celebrate; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues: innocence, it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves.
The footsteps of simplicity, impress'd
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)
Then were not all effac'd: then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found;
Observ'd as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams

Sat for the picture ; and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Impos'd a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it :—I still must envy them an age
That favour'd such a dream ; in days like these
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides,
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No : we are polish'd now ! The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost !
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribbands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains ;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propp'd upon French heels ; she might be deem'd
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for daily work, or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care !

The town has ting'd the country ; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas,
Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now !
Time was when, in the pastoral retreat,
The unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd
By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder, heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarm'd ! Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polish'd arms be prim'd with care,
And drop the night-bolt ;—ruffians are abroad ;
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear

To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Thro' pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslav'd by terror of the band,
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption! Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild-fowl or venison; and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
Of public virtue, ever wish'd remov'd,

Works the deplor'd and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures,—now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair,—
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and, mumbling, swears
A bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what! The task perform'd,
That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement: is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroship expir'd,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance, and harmless manners too!
To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home,
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends;
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a pest where he was useful once;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now!

Man, in society, is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone

His faculties expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
But man, associated and leagu'd with man
By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond,
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head, for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,
Contracts defilement not to be endur'd.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate, perhaps,
In all their private functions, once combin'd,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thund'ring pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.

But, slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural, too,
The first born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats

Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tytirus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engag'd my wonder, and, admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret suppos'd
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee, too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determin'd, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,
I studied, priz'd, and wish'd that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now, reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
I still revere thee, courtly though retir'd;
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends
For a lost world, in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: The love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
And, though the Almighty Maker has, throughout,
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact;
But none without some relish, none unmov'd.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it, neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it, or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture,—how they cheer

The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing strives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consol'd,
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lin'd with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's* darling? Are they not all proofs
That man, immur'd in cities, still retains
His inborn, inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct: over-head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health, and ease,
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame;
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life; and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injur'd land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, an heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;

* Mignonnette.

To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd,

ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The man and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War, one of them.—Wars, whence —And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastille, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.

BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

'TIS morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular, proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaister'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and, in bright apparel clad,
And fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,

Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep plunging oft,
His broad, keen knife, into the solid mass:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving, unconcern'd,
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur—
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then, with pressure of his thumb,
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping, at the housewife's well-known call,
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain; and, thievishly resolv'd
To escape the impending famine, often scar'd,
As oft return—a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each—the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut; and, wading at their head,
With well consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait, and stateliness retrench'd.

How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and vallies with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct promps; self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labour more; and, perch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the travellers track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixt, the snowy weight
Lies undissolv'd; while silently beneath,
And unperceiv'd, the current steals away.
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulph below:
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto, within grotto safe, defies
The sun-beam; there, emboss'd and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art,

And in defiance of her rival powers ;
By these fortuitous and random strokes,
Performing such inimitable feats
As she, with all her rules, can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admir'd,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ !
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear :
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of winter ; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy fleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose ;—
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoin'd ; nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfus'd to make them one.
Lamps gracefully dispos'd, and of all hues,
Illumin'd every side : a watery light
Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet, frost-bound,
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
Blush'd on the pannels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous ; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there ;
Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.

Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesign'd severity, that glanc'd
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless as it seem'd
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smil'd, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amus'd the dull, sad years of life,
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-liv'd themselves, to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy, the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drove asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they plough'd, and sow'd,
And reap'd their plenty, without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle firy war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:
The deluge wash'd it out: but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found

The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forc'd the blunt and yet unblooded steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal nam'd, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and faulchion their inventor claim;
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art surviv'd the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that rage of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth: these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage, at first,
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they serv'd in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenc'd no less. Who could with him compare,
Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdu'd their foes?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and, besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,

" And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account,
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if, exalting him, they rais'd themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment 'that he is but man'
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet; and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service, his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning; and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence, fit only for a god,
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that, when at length mankind
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made!
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing!

But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up, like other men,
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet,
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any, or with no pretence
Of provocation given, or wrong sustain'd,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than, of old,
Jotham ascrib'd to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and, reclin'd
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We, too, are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But, recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak;
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is our's
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and our's.
We love the man; the paltry pageant you.
We the chief patron of the commonwealth;
You the regardless author of its woes.

We, for the sake of liberty, a king;
You chains and bondage, for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Your's, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be belov'd
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Expos'd to manacles, deserves them well.
The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
And forc'd to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful: pow'r usurp'd
Is weakness when oppos'd; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts;
The surest presage of the good they seek*.

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old, or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Bastille!
Ye horrid tow'rs, the abode of broken hearts;
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears—
The sighs and groans of miserable men!

* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That even our enemies, so oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he who values liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind;
Immur'd, though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape!
There, like the visionary emblem, seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, fileted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone,
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball:
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd
And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aslant
And then alternate; with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish; till, the sum exactly found
In all directions, he begins again—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?

That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for, perhaps, an heedless word,
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation; makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean god,
Ador'd through fear, strong only to destroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery; and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free:
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine:
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From Nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either, starved by cold reserve,
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl:
Yet, being free, I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgrac'd as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But, once enslav'd, farewell! I could endure
Chains no where patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.

Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then, with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere;
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heav'n grant I may!
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough;
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause
Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hew'd them link from link: then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;
And, shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view,
'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;

And, seeing the old castle of the state,
That promised once more firmness, so assailed
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was registered in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock:
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there it yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away:
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppressions, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, deriv'd from heaven;
Bought with HIS blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token! It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God! His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
And are august; but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himself
Pronounc'd it transient, glorious as it is,
And, still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise.
These therefore, are occasional, and pass;
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office serv'd, they must be swept away.

Not so the labours of his love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty:—a flight into his arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But, ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul,
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts oppos'd in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future. Not an hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;
But unrepealable enduring death!
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud,

Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere;
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethron'd and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-liv'd; the puny child
Of self-congratulating pride, begot
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause,
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.

"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
"And stor'd the earth so plenteously with means
"To gratify the hunger of his wish;
"And doth he reprobate, and will he damn,
"The use of his own bounty? making first
"So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
"So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
"Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
"Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
"Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
"The teacher's office, and dispense at large
"Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
"Attend to their own music? have they faith
"In what with such solemnity of tone
"And gesture they propound to our belief?
"Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
"Is but an instrument, on which the priest
"May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
"The unequivocal authentic deed,
"We find sound argument, we read the heart."

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclin'd
To live on terms of amity with vice,

And sin without disturbance. Often urg'd,
(As often as libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import)
They gain at last his unreserv'd assent;
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death!
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise:
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song:
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And he by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust:
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure, to his lov'd land
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies!
Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown
Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chas'd them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise*.

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green wyths.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of Nature, and though poor perhaps compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My father made them all!"

* See Hume.

Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds, a world
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap—
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find,
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his father's work,
And has a richer use of your's than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city; plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound; but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it, and admires; but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,

But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for his
Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;
Praise that, from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowled'd sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him, or receives sublim'd
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd—
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man,
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they
With which heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts,
"That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
"Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
"If from your elevation, whence ye view
"Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
"And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
"Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
"Favour'd as our's; transgressors from the womb,
"And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
"And to possess a brighter heaven than your's!
"As one who long detain'd on foreign shores
"Pants to return, and when he sees afar
"His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
"From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
"Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
"So I with animated hopes behold,
"And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,

" That shew like beacons in the blue abyss,
" Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home
" From toilsome life to never ending rest.
" Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
" That give assurance of their own success,
" And that, infus'd from heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious word!
Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,
With intellects bemaz'd in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employ'd,
Worlds that had never been hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till thou proclaim thyself. Their's is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
'Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell;
Yet, deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work; which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and prov'd
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st:
Thy providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amus'd spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure;
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,

Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song—
A loud hosanna sent from all thy works ;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The author of her beauties, who, retir'd
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that sooths the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But oh thou bounteous giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !
Give what thou can'st, without thee we are poor ;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

Bells at a distance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A sheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is.—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described.—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from scripture.—That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of him who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness—Conclusion.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And, as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'
With melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave:
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Mov'd many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet, feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revok'd,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend!

A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe, and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allur'd
By every gilded folly, we renounc'd
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdu'd and tam'd
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all oft pray amiss,
And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendor of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,
And, intercepting in their silent fall

The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd:
Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart,
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd and squar'd and fitted to its place,
Does but incumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment, hood-wink'd. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them by a tune entranc'd.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all,
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,

And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And, in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! but speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise,
Age after age, then to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle; but, seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that mov'd,
While summer was, the pure and subtile lymph
Through the imperceptible meandring veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure;
The scentless and the scented rose; this red
And of an humbler growth, the * other tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighboring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave;
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if,
Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd
Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all;
Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;

* The Guelder-rose.

Hypericum, all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears; mezerion, too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
Her blossoms; and, luxuriant above all,
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform, uncolour'd scene,
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is nature's progress, when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are his,
That make so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms
That cultivation glories in, are his.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshalls all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjur'd, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that, in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements receiv'd a law,
From which they swerve not since. That under force
Of that controuling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescrib'd their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
The incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,

As too laborious and severe a task.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
To span omnipotence, and measure might,
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of its own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down!
But how should matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profan'd, not serv'd,
With self-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods
That were not; and commending, as they would,
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One spirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him; whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruits or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God!
His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.

Though winter had been none, had man been true,
And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake.
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favorite task,
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?—
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
Who pant with application misapplied,
To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls
Across a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture when the bawble finds
Its destin'd goal, of difficult access.—
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks
The polish'd counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.—
Nor him, who by his vanity seduc'd,
And sooth'd into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: station'd there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease;
Oft as the price deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass—but never bids!

Here, unmolested, though whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and play-time of the year,

That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hear with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome sallad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stock-dove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play:
He sees me, at once swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighboring beach; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dread alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleas'd
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feel their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet.
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one
That leads the dance a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolv'd with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd—
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind nature graces every scene
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish

All that are capable of pleasure pleas'd,
A far superior happiness to their's,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to his call
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law, whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own—the law of universal love.
He rul'd with meekness, they obey'd with joy;
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in their's.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part who rul'd the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! Every heart,
Each animal of every name, conceiv'd
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loath'd abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him, too, to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just, in his account, why bird and beast

Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Wag'd with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and, as his perfect image, lov'd.
The wilderness is their's, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrol'd;
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain!
The lion tells him—I am monarch here!
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection.—Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying, for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge—
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madness; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent,
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He, too, is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and, push'd all day,
With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,
To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent?—None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert)

The inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own!
But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,
Is register'd in heaven; and these, no doubt,
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise;
And when the bush-exploring boy, that seiz'd
The young, to let the parent bird go free;
Prov'd he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
All, in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on power of life and death.
But read the instrument, and mark it well:
The oppression of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!

The governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuag'd, has interpos'd,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
The injurious trampler upon nature's law.
That claims forbearance, even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Sav'd him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause;
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehears'd,

(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes) shall make the doctrine clear.—

Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd; and his chance was as he went
To join a traveller, of far different note—
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face, too, was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was mov'd
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thunder'd forth or rudely press'd,
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,
"And fantasies of dotards, such as thou,
"Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
"Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
"Need no such aids as superstition lends
"To steel their hearts against the dread of death."
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
Of such a gulph as he design'd his grave.
But, though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed
Declin'd the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, sav'd against his will!
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he sought

Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood·
But still in vain. The Providence, that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,
Spar'd yet again the ignobler, for his sake.
And now, his prowess prov'd, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinc'd,
His rage grew cool ; and, pleas'd perhaps to have earn'd
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacence he resum'd
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they far'd. Discourse on other themes
Ensuing, seem'd to obliterate the past ;
And, tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As is the course of rash and fiery men)
The rude companion smil'd, as if transform'd.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of Power divine
Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting in sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be control'd,
Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him : he flew
Sheer over the craggy barrier ; and, immers'd
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserv'd—and died alone!
So God wrought double justice ; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though grac'd with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path ;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes

Sacred to neatness and repose—the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory—may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileg'd; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this.—If man's convenience, health,
Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish their's.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who, in his sovereign wisdom, made them all.
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defil'd in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But alas none sooner shoots?
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shews it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which, having serv'd us, perish, we are held
Accountable; and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on their's.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in their's,
Are oft-times vanquish'd and thrown far behind.

Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadrupede instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourselves.
Attachment never to be wean'd, or chang'd
By any change of fortune; proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake!
But less, methink, than sacrilege might serve—
(For, was it less, what heathen would have dar'd
To strip Jove's statute of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design,
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel; Who, was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him; and, while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never us'd before,
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe;
And, with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,

The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of king George!
—Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worship while he liv'd
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre, too small, shall suffocate,
Its squeez'd contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act—
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and fram'd the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, fam'd in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas an hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtless, much edified, and all refresh'd.
—Man praises man. The rabble, all alive,
From tippling-benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy:
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and, turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he sav'd the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,

That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in their's
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodg'd already there!
Encomium in old time was poets' work;
But, poets having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand;
And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds
Among her lovely works with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
And I am recompens'd, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promis'd sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend,
Propitious, in his chariot pav'd with love;
And what his storms have blasted and defac'd
For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.

But, when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
That creeping pestilence is driven away;
The breath of heaven has chas'd it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not: the pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;

Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Each rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
* Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates; upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the farthest west;
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heaven-ward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.
So God has greatly purpos'd; who would else
In his dishonour'd works himself endure
Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
Haste, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;
And even the joy that haply some poor heart
Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure.

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Oh for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish ! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men :—
Where violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears :—
Where he that fills an office shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite :—where law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
And equity ; not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide aright :—
Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love !

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy ! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth ;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long-desir'd,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tir'd
Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
" Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
And aims them at the shield of truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;
And all the mysteries to faith propos'd,
Insulted and traduc'd, are cast aside,
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.

They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd,
Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind, and in love with darkness! yet even these
Worthy, compar'd with sycophants, who kneel
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolv'd to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life even now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not her's, for he has prov'd them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer-birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth

She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
His welfare is within. There unfatigu'd
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never withering wreaths, compar'd with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at even-tide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler in the best,
If, author of no mischief and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an incumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of wo,
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country, recompenses well
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.

The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast what few that win it can—
That, if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
Because that world adopts it. If it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and, for decorum sake,
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceiv'd; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling; and that vice,
Though well perfum'd and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcase trick'd with flowers,
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vext with care
Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and so at last,
My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me, weary, to a safe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd
To dress a sofa with the flowers of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon, to please her more,
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit;
Rov'd far, and gather'd much: some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despis'd.
But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.

In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart;
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.



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